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Sarcastic Family Climates: Self-Reported Evaluations of Family Interaction, Effect of Non-Literal Communication, and Attachment Style

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SARCASTIC FAMILY CLIMATES:
SELF-REPORTED EVALUATIONS OF FAMILY INTERACTION,
EFFECT OF NON-LITERAL COMMUNICATION,
AND ATTACHMENT STYLE

BY
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ABSTRACT

The non-literal aspect of sarcastic utterance meaning opens up multiple perspectives regarding its interpretation, ultimately depending on the context and the relationship between those that use it. Self-reports from 151 young adults indicated that there was significant correlation between father's typical intensity of sarcasm use and subject verbal aggression, with significantly less father intensity of typical sarcasm use reported by subjects with low levels of verbal aggression. These findings suggested that sarcasm use is more prevalent in typical father young-adult directed communication with subjects that report themselves as being moderate and high verbally aggressive communicators. When observing actual communicative episodes that young adults had with their parents, there were significant differences between sarcastic and non-sarcastic conversations for the interpersonal communication variables of Quality, Change, and Control; interestingly, there was no significant difference for the interpersonal communication variable of Value. There was no significant relationship between attachment style and mother or father typical of sarcasm usage.

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Sarcastic Family Climates:

Self-reported evaluations of family interaction,
effect of non-literal communication, and attachment style

INTRODUCTION

Sarcastic communication can be observed as an engrained, culture-wide phenomenon of indirectly expressing our perceptions and opinions to each other, which raises questions as to how as a society we negotiate and communicate our identities. Sarcasm is an example of non-literal language, a characteristic that grants the distinction of being perceived in many different ways: as humor or as insult (Creusere, 2000) , as muting the speaker's intended meaning, as the opposite of the speaker's surface level meaning (Grice, 1975, 1978), as echoing previous utterances or as a reminder (Kreuz and Glucksberg, 1989), and as pragmatic insincerity or an allusion to prior expectations or norms (Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, and Brown, 1995). Whatever the implication, non-literal language has the possibility of not only being misinterpreted, but misused as well. The implications for these outcomes are many, the most significant being that the intended meaning would be confused and misinterpreted as an alternate unintended meaning, resulting in unanticipated effects by the speaker.

Theoretical Arguments

Traditional communications researchers have always viewed sarcasm as a linguistic construct related to irony. Specifically, developmental scholars have looked

at children's understanding of literal versus non-literal language, which includes metaphor, irony, hyperbole, and deception (Creusere, 1997; Andrews, Rosenblatt, Malkus, Gardner, & Winner, 1986). These non-literal message expressions have been under criticism for the degree of difficulty associated with how these are interpreted. Conflicts in the literature exist regarding whether intonation is actually necessary or a useful instrument (Ackerman, 1986; Winner et al. 1987; Cruesere, 1997). While tone may not be necessary if one is aware of the context that the sarcastic or ironic utterance is used in, as seen in the evaluation of anecdotal models (Toplak and Katz, 2000; Kreuz and Glucksberg, 1989), it can provide certain distinctions regarding the speaker's meaning behind the utterance. Non-literal ironic utterances have been used to reference both explicit and implicated norms inherent to the relationship, a proposition that implies that irony is more difficult to process than literal forms of language.

Conventional Beliefs

A broad, culture-wide appraisal of non-literal language indicates fairly frequent usage, originating from multiple sources. Perhaps the most important distinction, as we attempt to place irony and sarcasm within our lives, is the dual-existence of irony: Discourse irony is a statement upon which understanding of a message can be achieved on multiple levels; Situational irony is a portrayal of circumstances through which a dual level of understanding is implied. The media creates many of its stories by examining situational irony, and has gained a reputation in the process for sensationalizing how inconsistent public perception is with reality:

The school teacher with whom the public trusts their children with during the day, tutors selected students at her home at night and then is found to have been involved in an affair with one of them (Budd, 2000).

All kinds of people use sarcastic statements during their daily interactions, hinting at missed opportunities, failed expectations, or on some occasions as a code, a secret understanding between two communicators who carry on discourse on one level, yet mean something else entirely (Clark and Marshall, 1981; Clark, Schreuder, and Buttrick, 1983). Researchers who have studied what qualifies as sarcastic or ironic utterances have first sought to clarify the differences between situational and discourse irony (Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, and Brown, 1995). Central to both concepts, it has been concluded, is the notion of *failed expectation*, whether observable in our interactions with the world or with each other (Kumon-Nakamura, et al., p. 4). While there may be a negative connotation to a *failed expectation*, expectations can have a variety of sources and implications to consider, whether negative or positive.

Sarcasm in Culture

Historians have always used the literature produced during a particular period in conjunction with more concrete evidence collected for a certain period. Authors have used the novel, in various fashions, either to serve as a living representation of what is exactly going in the world that they observe around themselves, or conversely, as a representation of exactly not. For example, Paul Zindel's 1971 play "The effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds" creatively portrays a neurotic middle-aged woman as she struggles to raise two extremely different teenage

daughters. Beatrice Hunsdorfer, the play's maligned mother, manages and copes with the world's difficulties the best she knows how. Expressing her displeasure vocally with her sarcastic observations and criticism, Beatrice's strained relationship with her children implies dire consequences in their development. This portrayal and others like it can serve as a mirror, reflecting the contemporary society they are representing. These observations are particularly useful to latter day scholars, as they attempt to come up with answers to how language use and function reflects the influence of greater social forces.

Television media, specifically the sit-com, have introduced characters whose identities have resonated with viewers. Some of these characters have had instant recognition and acceptance because of their ability to encapsulate certain feelings or sentiments of the time within the viewer. In line with the women's rights movements that were just gaining momentum, traditional roles in households were questioned and examined, serving to fuel the interest in characters such as Lucy Esmeralda MacGillicuddy Ricardo (Lucille Ball) from *I Love Lucy* (1951-1957), and Alice Kramden (Audrey Meadows) from *The Honeymooners* (1955-1956). Struggle against traditional, constraining elements of society, such as the women and minority role in the workplace and home continued through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s through characters such as Fred Sanford (Redd Foxx) of *Sanford and Son* (1972-1977), Carla Tortelli (Rhea Perlman) as a waitress at Boston bar room *Cheers* (1982-1993), and Roseanne Barr, a rough mother of the Conner family on *Roseanne* (1988-1997). A trend among marginalized sub-cultures representation in television programming

seems to portray sarcasm usage as a form of commentary. This usage suggests sarcasm as a subtext that implies a more emotionally dictated level of communication, consistent with the dual level nature of language use proposed by Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1984).

NBC's 1990s hit television show *Friends* (1994-2004) demonstrated that a sarcastic brand of humor was identifiable to *majority* demographic as well. The cast is a collection of young and attractive, Caucasian co-eds, all who are working in the New York City, living in interpretively expensive large apartments, and searching for companions. Perhaps taking a cue from its original time slot partner, the self-styled show about nothing *Seinfeld* (1990-1998), the character of Chandler Bing (Matthew Perry), is especially free with his sarcastic banter, as the wry observer of everyone else's life. Chandler's sarcastic observations often serve to deescalate tensions created by more intense characters in the show, a purpose of sarcasm and irony seemingly consistent with face-saving (Jorgensen, 1996) and reminding purposes (Krueze and Glucksberg, 1989), and more importantly, maintaining the *Friendships*.

The practice of saying one thing and meaning something different is by no means isolated to modern American culture. The non-literal language form of sarcasm has not been viewed with such high regard. Thomas Carlyle, 19th century poet and historian concerned with social injustice and the need for faith and understanding, comments in his *Sartor Resartus*,: "Sarcasm I now see to be, in general, the language of the devil." While perhaps it would be unfair to make such a bold leap as to imply a connection between sarcasm and Satan, George Eliot, 19th century writer, bluntly

claims that, “Blows are sarcasm’s turned stupid.” While Eliot equated sarcasm with physical violence the further insinuation that sarcasm requires a bit more intelligence has been proven to be correct. Not only do children understand non-literal expressions of language years later than they do literal expressions (Cruesere, 1997), but research has indicated that right hemisphere brain-damaged patients find it difficult to understand sarcasm (McDonald, 2000).

Even a world leader has not hesitated to make his opinion known regarding sarcastic communication. The Pope John Paul II, in the month of February 2003, made a proclamation regarding sarcasm, suggesting that a sarcastic person delights in “isolating the righteous with mockery and irony”.¹ While what he followed this with was more of a statement about not assuming the attitudes and vices of ones oppressor, the message sent from the leading authority in the Roman Catholic church was essentially that sarcasm has no place in the heart of a religious person. The connections that have been made between sarcasm usage and the willingness to negatively affect other people through discourse can be looked at further from a systematic perspective.

Sarcasm in Society (Reflected)

The 21st century has shown us a world in which rampant consumerism and the economies of scale created by multinational companies have developed a North American society of disposable (re: affordable) everything. There is disposable *pop* music, and disposable containers for fast food. There are disposable portions of

¹ Pope John Paul II (2003). Pope hits out against sarcasm. *General Audience of John Paul II*.

stomachs that are not needed anymore, and disposable fads and cultural perspectives. Reality television has become the train-wreck that no one *really* wants to watch, but somehow feels obligated to; its latest revelation to the masses is that *nothing* is sacred anymore. The dignity as human beings has been capable of such great things, expressed by poets and writers throughout time. These expressions, such as love, hope, inspiration, passion, loyalty, honor, respect, have given way to the sensationalist stories of mass murders, treachery, sexual crime, and other evils that have become a daily part of our lives through our televisions. If irony and sarcasm can be used by speakers to allude to failed expectations, realities impossible to live up to, or as a measuring stick for how out-of-sync modern life is with the transparency of simpler times, what explanation can be given to explain how it is broadly used and accepted? Perhaps it is easier on all of our consciences to laugh it all off? Perhaps the mundane existence of perfectly predictable lives can not be fully appreciated unless we have some chaos to balance out the vivid order of this reality?

Sarcasm is not one of these *evils* portrayed in media programming. Instead, it can be viewed in this regard as a social commentary, wrapped in a smooth coating (disguised as another meaning) to make it go down easier. Sarcastic utterances can serve as ways of voicing interpretations of the events that go on around us, without actually sharing what it is that really should or could be said. If there is a preferred way of using language, referring to the actual way in which language is meant to be used (Grice, 1975, 1978), then the case can be made that there are subsets of this universal interpretation that are more or less culturally scribed. Maintaining positive

surface-level language use is another purpose of sarcastic and ironic utterances, constructed to be at least literally consistent with the positive expectations of society and utmost respect associated with having so many opportunities of a country where everyone has the possibility of fulfilling one's own "American Dream".

Communicating with others as to our positive expectations, surface level or otherwise, expresses consistency of thought and membership in this ideology.

Membership, from perspective of socialization behaviors, can be thought of as belonging to a group of similar or likeminded (re: purpose) people. Whether association is conceptualized on a societal level, or even smaller on a familial level, there is a certain amount of identification that is sought. Finding oneself in a family, a sub-culture in itself, suggests a broad spread of constraining and defining features that make it unique. The negotiation of these features is not always an even process, if at all, when considering who holds the financial strings within these families.

Sarcasm in Families

The family has been considered the "cornerstone" or the "foundation" of the country, rhetorical expressed by pundits representing political, educational, and special interests. Just as many champion the importance of family values, tradition, and stability, the patriarchal model of an extended family has shifted regardless in modern society: the father can no longer be assumed the main income earner as typically both parents find themselves employed; examples of families in which children are raised without fathers have been granted acceptance and recognition; and inventions such as the automobile, the telephone, the internet, and the extreme

popularity and affordability of cellular telephones have lessened the importance of proximity in maintaining a sense of family.

Just as peer-groups or work environments might be pervaded by sarcastic communication, family climates can harbor negative or positive feelings toward such communication. Much of the research has centered on the child's ability to understand parent's use of literal and non-literal communication with their children (Andrews, Rosenblatt, Malkus, Gardner, and Winner, 1986) and the role that intonation (Ackerman, 1983; Dews, Winner, Rosenblatt, Hunt, Lim, McGovern, Qualter, and Smarsh, 1996), facial affect (Cruesere, 1997) and placement of contextual information (Ackerman, 1982) play in these interpretations. All of these studies find both responsibility and fault in the adult for their own language use, an approach that presents an issue of miscommunication with a simple solution: choice.

By viewing the development of information and message processing in children as on-going, family researchers have created a longitudinal plot by which non-literal language can eventually be distinguished from literal language. The suggestion that sarcasm requires additional cognitive processes in order to interpret ironic and sarcastic utterances is verified by linguistic (Gerrig and Goldvarg, 2000) and brain function (McDonald, 1999) literature. Underlying implications of this, if placed into a broader timeframe within the family, can create some explanation for how multiple meanings of sarcastic language can create miscommunication and confused intentions in offspring attempting to cognitively process the utterance.

Especially for those who have trouble understanding the reasons and motives of their parent's communication, sarcastic or otherwise, the nature of the family creates a situation relatively unique in comparison to other small groups: it is largely involuntary (Bochner, 1978). While divorce can be an option for parents, children only get the opportunity in extremely rare situations (which in itself can be situational ironic). For the rest of the adolescent and young adult population, in the process of asserting their own identity, the alternatives are few: deal with it or withdraw. The study attempts to look at what feelings and interpretations could affect such decisions, and especially what we can learn about how sarcastic communication is experienced during this time.

Theoretical Framework

Sarcasm Interpretation Perspective

The thesis is based on several seminal pieces of literature. Grice (1975, 1978), in his explorations of the pragmatic nature of language, established a set of four maxims of communication, setting a *gold standard* of how communication was conceptually intended to operate. The use of sarcasm is a direct violation of the two of these maxims: the maxim of *manner*, which states that communication is supposed to avoid ambiguity and obscurity of expression, as well as the maxim of *quality*, which stipulates that communication is expected to be truthful. The flouting of these maxims, or blatantly failing to fulfill them gives rise to *conversational implicatures*. Perhaps the most useful perspective gained can be our understanding of these as simply maxims, which lose much of their practicality when applied to actual life contexts.

Researchers attempting to understand the ways in which sarcasm is used and interpreted have typically linked the concept with irony. While it is possible to be sarcastic without being ironic, most sarcasm uses irony to get its bitter caustic effect (for example, see Appendix F).

In terms of trying to interpret sarcasm and understand how people know when and why to use it, researchers have come up with a variety of explanations. Standard definitions of sarcastic and ironic utterance have proposed that a target, upon reception of a sarcastic message, must attempt to understand the literal meaning, decide if the speaker intended the literal meaning, and then if necessary, interpret alternative meanings based on the opposite of the literal meaning (Grice, 1975, 1978; Gibbs, 1986). Criticism of this model has arisen from the implied expectations that people will only follow this method of understanding. Additionally, the idea of the *opposite of the literal meaning* is a very narrow method of characterizing all sarcastic and ironic utterances. Someone who proclaims to her peers, “I’m having a great day” might be interpreted as being ironic if she just had her car stolen and a member of her family passed away. A listener could interpret that literal meaning as untrue, and determine through adopting the opposite meaning that the speaker is instead, in fact, having a terrible day. However, if someone proclaims to her peers, “I’m having a great day” and the implication could be that they were mocking a similar and yet insincere utterance made earlier by an uncaring supervisor. We cannot, however, assume the opposite of the literal meaning to be true in such circumstances.

Echoic mention theory (Jorgensen, Miller, & Sperber, 1984, Sperber and Wilson, 1981, 1986) attempted to account for this usage in expressing sarcasm and ironic communication. The theory proposes that there may not be a non-literal expression that listeners would typically need to process and assume the opposite. Instead, the listener would need to make a recollection to a prior idea and then take into account the attitude of the speaker. An example under these conditions would be the friend, Bob, who offers to help his buddy, Jane, move out of her house and in advance says “I am ready for heavy lifting and moving all day.” When the day of the move arrives, Bob shows up in the afternoon after most of the work has already been done, and barely helps Jane move the rest of her belongings. Naturally annoyed and disappointed, Jane turns to her delinquent buddy and says, “I am ready for heavy lifting and moving all day.” Understanding the necessity of Jane’s utterance highlights the importance of this perspective of sarcastic and ironic communication. Jane obviously knows that Bob made the statement, so what else could she have possibly been trying to communicate besides what she mentioned? Her reaction, the disapproval and disappointment in Bob’s ability to make his actions consistent with his words, was an important part of the message. Echoic mention theory is intended to account for a literal recall of a previous utterance or notion, and the variation lies then in the speaker’s intention.

Echoic reminder theory takes this model and alters it slightly (Kreuz and Glucksberg, 1989). This perspective looks at ironic and sarcastic utterances as reminders of previous utterances, states, or affairs. Rather than simply mentioning

previous expectations, the act of reminding calls to it certain expectations regarding what was at one time commonly shared beliefs or perceptions. Distinctions between positive statements meant to express failed expectations and negative statements meant to express fulfilled expectations are of particular concern. An example of a positive sarcastic statement with failed (re: unfulfilled) expectations would be “You are a great son”, when a list of chores, given to the son by the father has been left undone for weeks. This could be understood as being a sarcastic and ironic statement. An example of a negative statement meant to express fulfilled expectations would be “You are a terrible son”, when not only the chores are done, but the entire house has been painted and the taxes prepared. This could not be easily considered ironic or sarcastic unless there was reason to express otherwise, and could likely be interpreted as nonsense. Kreuz and Glucksberg (1989) call this the “marked asymmetry of ironic statements”, which is quintessential in the determination of how important *explicit antecedents* are to statement comprehension (p. 376). An *explicit antecedent*, such as a statement “Today is going to be great,” is not necessary to understand an ironic utterance used later if a family is attending a theme park. Cultural norms and ritualized expectations surrounding the adventure of attending a theme park, such as Disneyworld or Universal Studios, already provide an implicit antecedent. If the family had a terrible time, involving long lines, inflated costs at concession stands, and sick/lost kids, the summarizing statement “This was great” can be interpreted as ironic or sarcastic, without anyone ever having said a word.

Allusional Pretence Theory of Discourse Irony (Kumon-Nakamura, Glucksberg, and Brown, 1995) makes an attempt to pull in another set of concepts, but in the process pulls the body of research full circle. Irony and sarcastic utterances are considered *allusive* because they act in way that brings attention to some failed conditions or expectations. While the theory concedes that echoic utterances are able to do this by echoing some prior utterance or thought, whether implicit or explicit, there are in fact other ways in which ironic or sarcastic utterances allude to unfulfilled expectations (Kumon-Nakamura et al., 1995, p. 5). The idea of *pragmatic insincerity*, the other important element of allusional pretence theory, hits on the distinction necessitated by the contrast between truth and sincerity. Standard pragmatic views of irony and sarcasm (Grice, 1975, 1978) have involved uttering false assertions, which apply acceptably to statements and observations, but make no effort to incorporate compliments, questions, and requests.

The research regarding the decision of what is and what is not sarcasm presents several areas of interest regarding the heuristic evaluation of the possibilities of sarcasm. Expectations regarding how language is supposed to function are violated by many non-literal expressions, however not all of them have negative intentions. The usage and interpretation of sarcasm and irony requires a certain effort and contextual understanding that direct communication does not. The *pragmatic insincerity* implications made by allusional pretense theory (Kumon-Nakamura, 1995) allow sarcastic and ironic expressions not only to be seen as violations of truth, but violations of the ability or desire to be the truth. The burden of such language, after

spoken by the speaker, then falls on the target, who then must decide what to do with it.

Verbal Aggression and Sarcasm

There is a distinction between the research regarding what qualifies as sarcastic utterance and what the social consequences are as a result. Previous work has examined how adult interpretations of their adult-parents' directed messages had affected relationship satisfaction. Beatty and Dobos (1992) interviewed adult sons on their interpretations of their father's messages and found significant correlation between sarcastic and critical communication and a lack of satisfaction in the relationship. In a follow up study, Beatty, Zelley, Dobos, and Rudd (1994) examined the presence of trait verbal aggressiveness in parents as a predictor of their adult son's perceptions of their father's sarcasm, criticism, and verbal aggressiveness. Verbal aggressiveness was found to have an effect on the perceptions of sarcasm and criticism, which is unsurprising considering the characterization of sarcasm as an act of "indirect aggression". Infante and Wigley (1986) have described verbal aggressiveness as "a tendency to attack the self-concepts of individuals instead of or in addition to their positions on communication topics" (p. 61). The most notable result, of which is the damage that it causes to the self-concept of the target. The presence of sarcastic communication in families, which are unique due to the extend time that members are in relation with one another, would seem to amplify the effects of such communication, if not checked by other factors which would seem to include the behavior of the target.

Attachment Research

Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1973) attempts to account for how the development of emotional connections, patterns of communication behavior, effects of the nurturing environment, and the implications for future interaction with other adults contribute to the development of children and their view of the world around them. The relationship and style of interaction, which is developed throughout the progression of a child's life with that of their parents, creates a reciprocal nature of interactions that helps prepare the child for survival. In evaluating the availabilities of the caregiver, infants examine caregiver behavior and external information to decide if they can be relied upon or not. Internal working models are used to forecast caregiver availability and responsiveness. These working models and the behaviors of the adults that support them create a pattern of connection and interaction that will stay with the child throughout their entire life.

Adapted from Bowlby's attachment theory have been three and four category assessment interview procedures. These procedures have been demonstrated as successfully relatable to hosts of communicative and relationship variables (Hazan and Shaver, 1994). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) developed a four-category measure that serves to implement the "working models" of self and others that help children create prototypes used in dealing with and creating expectations for the behaviors of their parents and others later in life. .

In examination of parent-young adult interaction, we can imagine possible trajectories upon which adolescents have moved along. On the one hand, if

communication were to wane during this period, expectations and common understandings would gradually disappear. Parent and child would exist in a state of mystery and tension, much as how Kenneth Burke (1964) explains the separations between social classes in contemporary society, with each held in their place shear lack of understanding of the other. On the contrary, another hypothetical scenario for adolescent development would dictate that strong communicative histories might help adolescents and young adults through the challenges particular to their developments into adults. These families might have a greater repertoire of communicative abilities at their disposal and greater clarity as to the feelings and needs of other members.

Development of the Research Questions and Hypothesis

Within the family context, it is through self-reports of young adults that certain curiosities arise. Scholars that have occupied themselves with interpretations of sarcastic messages have relied on self-reports for there ability to provide direction and insight for speakers as to the outcomes of their communicative tendencies (Dobos and Beatty, 1992, 1994). On a practical level, young adults can gain volition and a means through which true opinions and perceptions of certain styles of communication can be expressed. For most of the young adults, such opportunities outside of the research setting are most likely not presented before. Conversations between peers about the actual nature of their family experience would suggest a level of self-disclosure not typical for standard exchanges. Brief and general disclosures about ones' family are usually standard fare for brief or light conversation. Sometimes even friends that have been connected for years lack the familiarity to have candid moments

about family-life, especially if the young adult has interpreted the communication behavior of their parents as abusive.

The proposed study will examine the possible connection between young adults' impressions of directed messages from their parents, attachment style, and certain aspects of personal communication style. Young adults are at a unique position in their development, possessing a vantage point from which they can reflect and evaluate their parent's typical communicative behavior. Family relationships are involuntary, and thus allow for certain communicative behaviors to be dealt with and compensated for over time (Bochner, 1978). Family sarcastic communicative behaviors, which if one so chooses could be avoided in peer and possibly work relationships, truly must be accounted for to account for future interactions in the family.

RQ1: How do young adults experience sarcasm in their interactions with their parents?

This research question is admittedly far reaching, which can carry with it many implications. It was worded and presented as such intentionally, however given the scope of interest and theoretical implications. The nature of the term *young adults*, with particular consideration to how they interact with their parents, has not received significant much attention in relation to sarcasm interpreted meaning. This area lies in a open spot between parent-child interaction, which has received considerable

attention, and adult-parent interaction, which is similarly lacking. Prior studies of sarcastic and ironic communication that have used college-aged participants have mostly used the term *adults* to qualify their subjects, and thus the scope their entire study. There is a distinction to be made, specifically because of the particular physical and emotional age that will be examined in respect to the relationship with the parents.

On an individual level, experiencing sarcasm can be a very personal and unique experience, especially within family contexts. From a heuristic perspective, this experience can be viewed as an attempt to describe the complete way of looking at not only the communicative utterance itself, but also the effect that it has on the receiver of the message. It is the goal of this study to understand how sarcastic communication fits into characterizations of family communication behavior. When viewed as a non-literal form of expression, sarcastic utterances open windows of interpretation for developing minds to attach certain meanings that are inline with their self-concept and needs for socialization.

Interaction in such settings provides for a unique communication context, typified by an extended period of interactions and a lack of relationship punctuation (Bochner, 1978). The subjects of the study, young adults, represent an age group that is in a unique position in relation to the parent(s) that they are communicating with: They have passed beyond the years of adolescent innocence and subsequent characteristic lack of responsibility, but they are also not old enough to be completely withdrawn from the influence (re: financial, emotional, or physical) of their parent families. Although we can ask subjects for various characterizations of their

communication with their parents, actual exchanges would be useful in gauging interaction.

These factors create an intersection of inquiry that when examined individually, can be viewed as extensions from particular types of research. When examined collaboratively, the overlap series to highlight a unique and yet significant place in communication research. The role and placement of sarcasm in particular family contexts, viewed from the retrospective characterizations and contextually developed awareness of young adults will allow for the rare examination of a native perspective usually evident only through individual social service settings conducted by outsiders. Attachment style can serve as an effective way of categorizing particular family interaction types and help to evaluate how sarcasm is viewed by the young adults that belong to these family types. The adult attachment style model provided by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) provides four types of attachment: *Secure*, *preoccupied*, *dismissing*, and *fearful*.

H1: Secure attachment styles will be most comfortable with parent-young adult directed sarcastic communication, simultaneously reporting high levels of interaction and involvement, and a greater level of satisfaction with the relationship.

People that are characterized by the attachment style measure as *Secure* are the most comfortable with the model of themselves and of others, who in this context is

their parents. This comfort level would seem to allow some range for those close to them: they should be most likely to interpret sarcastic utterances as having a jocular or non-serious nature. Constant supportive talk and a consistent presence on the part of the parent does not leave a great deal of room for sarcastic utterance and more importantly, non-threatening interpretation.

H2: Preoccupied attachment styles will be the least comfortable with parent sarcastic communication, reporting high levels of interaction, but low satisfaction with the relationship.

In the Bartholomew et al. (1991) model of attachment styles, *Preoccupieds* are characterized by a negative model of themselves, but a positive model of others. Such an obvious discrepancy would appear to be a realistic representation of the reserved child, who looks up to his/her elders with reverence and loving adoration. While such a characterization could be viewed in a positive manner with good role models, or parent figures, the case is simply much different when the advice or examples provided are not the best. This attachment style, in relation to general impressions of sarcastic family communication behaviors, would tend to regard such communication as too much for *Preoccupieds* too handle. A sensitive self-impression, along with a eagerness to please others despite ones' own needs, is a recipe too easily spoiled by sarcasm with negative intentions.

H3: Dismissive attachment styles will avoid their parent's interaction, and thus will not be greatly affected by their parent's sarcastic communication.

Similar to *Secures*, *Dismissives* have a positive self-concept that limits how much positive or negative interpretations of sarcastic communication will affect them. However, because of their steady focus on independence, *Dismissives* tend to disregard the opinions of their parents to the point that it affects the level of intimacy in their own personal relationships. Whether their parent's interaction imply negative or positive feeling interaction with their offspring through their interactions, expressed sarcastically or otherwise, those characterized by this attachment style are not attentive enough to experience it anyway.

H4: Fearful attachment styles will deal have the most negative impression of parent sarcastic communication.

Those subjects that are characterized as having a *Fearful* attachment style can attribute their negative model of self and of others to neglect and extremely inconsistent signs of affection. These subjects simply expect that their parents will exhibit negative, rejecting behavior to them and have been backed into a corner so many times that it is largely evident in their behavior. This attachment style has been shown to have the least number of overall representations in a population sample.

H5a: Subjects that are more verbally aggressive will less likely to be affected negatively by family communication climates characterized by sarcastic communication than those that are less verbally aggressive.

Verbally aggressive people consider aggressive messages as less hurtful than do their verbally non-aggressive counterparts (Infante et al., 1986). Sarcastic communication is characterized as having aggressive qualities, and thus we could stand to reason that young adults that characterized their own communication as sarcastic will be less likely to report their parents communication as harsh, insulting, or hostile on the Beatty and Dobos (1992) seven point adjective scale. Furthermore, depressive symptoms have correlated positively with preoccupied and fearful attachment style self-ratings, and negatively with the secure attachment style. This would appear to be consistent with the Infante et al. (1986) claim that the most apparent effect of verbally aggressive communication is a damaged self-concept.

H5b: Verbal Aggressiveness will be the least evident in those subjects characterized by Secure attachment styles, and most evident in those with Dismissive attachment styles.

The inherent nature associated with those characterized by a *Secure* attachment style would suggest a contradiction with the special verbal communicative tendencies of those are higher in verbal aggressiveness levels. Securely attached subjects would

have less of a need to attack the self-concept of others, being so sure of their own personal perceptions. Dismissively attached subjects, by definitional nature, would appear to have no inclination against using verbally aggressive communication. While the independence and diminished regard for the needs and opinions of others would not necessarily preclude subjects to expressing only verbally aggressive communicative behaviors, it could indicate a certain higher tolerance to using such communication and the ability to receive it.

RQ2: How do young adults perceive sarcastic interactions in relation to non-sarcastic interactions when communicating with their parent?

Following the reasoning that we have established in understanding how parent-young adult directed communication could be perceived, it would be reasonable to suggest that there would be a difference between how sarcastic and non-sarcastic interaction can be viewed and understood. In order to arrive at an understanding of what possible differences might exist from within this context, a comparison of these two types of communication would be necessary. Duck, Rutt, Hurst, and Strejc (1991) have developed the Iowa Communication Record (ICR), which is an instrument that consists of a collection of variables used for evaluating the impact of the communication in a dyad. These variables serve as viable interpersonal communication indicators as to any significant differences between sarcastic and non-sarcastic communication in parent-young adult directed interaction.

While providing subjects with the ICR will be effective in isolating differences between received sarcastic and non-sarcastic communication, the ability to identify the specific meaning and purpose for actual sarcastic utterance would provide further clarification. Toplak and Katz (2000), through a comprehensive review of the literature, have developed a way of understanding intent of sarcastic communication by providing listeners with the various meanings researchers have identified. These meanings are variable, and ultimately are identified as dependent on the relationship between speaker and listener, as well as whom was the target of the utterance. By asking for actual examples of parent young-adult directed sarcastic utterance, trends for these comments can be evaluated.

METHODOLOGY

This study consisted of two parts: a baseline survey in which the research questions and multiple hypotheses were tested and a communication record which participants filled out throughout the course of the study. The survey was based on measures for evaluating elements of reported family communication behavior, adult attachment style, and subject tendency for verbally aggressive communication.

Part One: Family Sarcasm Usage, Attachment, and Communication Tendencies

Respondents:

The *Family Communication Survey Packet (FCSP)* was administered to the sample body during a two-week period. The sample body involved 151 participants, between the ages of 18 and 27 ($M = 19.84$). Of the sample body, 62% ($n = 93$) were female and 38% ($n = 57$) were male. Six different COM100: Communication

Fundamentals courses were used, which featured mostly freshmen. In addition, due to concerns regarding return rate and full completion of the sizable survey packet, another three classes were used, including two upper level conflict communication classes and one upper-level nonverbal class. The *FCSP* was distributed and completed during the classes in which the study was administered, with completion requiring approximately thirty-five minutes.

Of the possible 240 students that were enrolled in the chosen courses, 190 were present the day the study was conducted. The 151 participant results that are used by this study reflect a number of responses that were (a) returned in full with both the first and the second part filled out completely, and (b) returned in a reasonably punctual manner. A total of 12 surveys were returned late, which the researcher felt violated critical expectations conveyed when the survey was administered. There were 27 surveys that were incomplete: 18 had the first part of the survey completed but not the second, 6 were missing the second communication record in the second part, 2 were too incomplete in various ways to count for anything, and 1 was illegible. The 12 surveys that were submitted late as well as the 27 incomplete surveys were excluded from consideration for this study.

Procedure:

The administration of the *FCSP* was conducted and supervised by the researcher in each instance. The process began with the distribution of an *Informed Consent form* (see Appendix A), followed by an explanation of the major details of the project and its implications for participants. Emphasis in the explanation was placed

on the minimum age requirement for participation (age = 18), the option not to participate in exchange for an alternative assignment (thus voluntary), and the assurance of confidentiality. After any questions from the participants were answered, the researcher asked that the Informed Consent forms would be signed, dated, and passed forward. Quickly checking for participant signatures, the researcher signed and dated next to the participant before continuing with the study.

After the Informed Consent forms were collected and signed, the *FCSP* was passed out. Participants were asked not to proceed with the packet until they had read the cover letter, which provided brief descriptions and instructions for the surveys, as well as acknowledged the *Survey Identification Form* (for a representative template, see Appendix B.) that was being circulated. Participants were asked to write their name next to an empty Identification number, followed by their email address. The researcher at this point reminded that recording names and email were to coordinate the collection of the survey packets that were being passed out to them, as well as record any extra credit that was individually decided upon by the courses' Instructor/Professor. It was further reiterated that this list was to be destroyed at the completion of the collection period. Participants were asked to use the Identification number that they marked their name next to as the "ID#" requested by the *FCSP*, which was located multiple times throughout the packet.

The modal age of the college freshman is 18, an age that is representative of several key factors: these students are dominantly still dependent on their parent's financial, and, on varying levels, emotional involvement in their lives and thus subject

to their opinions and life-decisions; they have emerged from adolescence and have become young adults (providing a perspective on the family experience that would not be possible involving someone at a younger age); and they are more than likely eager to clear-the-air regarding their parents and family environment as they seek affinity with their peers and new environment("You are normal. I am normal.").

Measures:

The *FCSP* was composed of several different instruments used for measuring family demographics, parent-young adult directed communication, attachment style, and subject verbal aggressiveness. By using the adult attachment style model provided by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), we can characterize a sample population of young adults by the healthiness of their self-concept and their capacity for socialization. In conjunction with a brief demographics profile, an assessment can be made, per subject, regarding how differing socio-economic class, frequency of interaction, and level of involvement for each family can be plotted. Typical parent-young adult directed communicative behavior was measured using a modified communication instrument based on that used by Beatty and Dobos(1992). The original instrument used by Beatty and Dobos (1992), was used to account for typical supportive, criticism, sarcasm communication in father's communication directed at their adult son. Further research by Beatty and Dobos (1994), was used to account for trait verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness in males' perceptions of their father's messages. In order for this study to account for the indirect aggression aspect of sarcastic messages (re: picking a target) the *Compliance Survey*, part of the *FCSP*,

will be based on the successful verbal aggression instrument developed by Infante and Wigley (1986).

Part Two: Take Home Communication Record

Respondents:

The *Communication Record Packet (CRP)* was distributed during the same time period as the *Family Communication Survey Packet (FCSP)*. While participants recorded their responses for the *FCSP*, they were each provided with a *CRP* on their desk. The sample body involved 151 participants, between the ages of 18 and 27 ($M = 19.84$). Demographic statistics have provided additional meaningful clarifiers. Of the sample body, 62% ($n = 93$) were female and 38% ($n = 57$) were male. Six different *COM100: Communication Fundamentals* courses were used, which featured mostly first-year students. In addition, due to concerns regarding return rate and full completion of the instrument, another three classes were used, including two upper level conflict communication classes and one upper-level nonverbal class.

Procedure:

The *CRP* required additional instructions that were provided by the researcher when every participant had received their copy. Each participant was asked to verify that they within the *CRP*, they had received a total of two *Communication Records* as well as a separate *Episode Intention Survey (EIS)*. Participants were asked by the researcher to take the entire packet home and return it completed within a two-week period. The researcher indicated to the participants that they were to fill-out the *Communication Records* after the completion of a conversation with their parent,

when they had ensured that it could be completed privately. It was explained that the first communication record was to be filled out after a matter-of-fact, general information conversation with their parent or parent-figure. It was also explained that the second communication record was to be filled out after a sarcastic conversation marked by a parent or parent-figure. Participants were asked to then fill out the *EIS* upon completion of the second communication record. To avoid a discussion that could compromise the research goals of the study, participants were told to refer to the definition of sarcasm on the cover instruction sheet of the *CRP*. Participants were reminded to transfer their Identification number from the survey identification form to the *CRP*. Finally, participants were told that after they had completed the *FCSP*, they were dismissed. While participants were informed that the each Communication Record wouldn't take them longer than fifteen minutes to complete, due to the nature and context in which they were completed, there was no item used in the *CRP* to now verify this prediction.

Measures:

The communication record that was be used is based on the Iowa Communication Record (ICR) developed by Duck, Rutt, Hurst, and Strejc (1991). Similar to how an individual would recall an event and record their reactions to it in a diary, the ICR allows a specific communication exchange to be documented. The ICR lays out methods of quantitative assessment such as interaction and relationship measuring scales, as well as qualitative means of accounting for sarcastic communication behaviors. Sarcastic communication, in relation to the family

environments it is produced in, will be more salient with methods for evaluating the actual communicative utterance. Unlike direct observation, the ICR will facilitate natural and common interactions between the subject and their parent by not interfering or distracting the normal flow of discourse. Subjects were asked to fill out the form as soon as appropriately possible to diminish the effects that time would have on their ability to accurately report on the communicative event.

RESULTS

Analysis Strategy

The data set contained multiple types of data, necessitating multiple analytic techniques. The hypotheses can be divided up into three areas: questions about attachment style, questions about verbal aggressiveness, sarcasm and satisfaction and comparisons using the Iowa Communication Record. Since measurement of attachment yielded discrete attachment styles for each subjects, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to detect attachment-related differences. Attachment style was used as the independent variable to allow examination of multiple variables assessed on interval scales. Verbal aggressiveness and the items on the Episode Intention Scale (EIS) were measured on an interval scale. Pearson correlations were used to assess the relationships among verbal aggressiveness, intention and variables like intensity of parental sarcasm and satisfaction with parent-young adult relationships . In order to examine the effects of verbal aggressiveness on episode intention, the data set was divided into quartiles using verbal aggressiveness. Using t-tests, the quartiles with the lowest verbal aggression scores were compared with the quartile with highest VA

scores on each item on the EIS. Finally, previous work in the Iowa Communication Record has established four stable dimensions in the instrument (Duck, et al., 1991). Quality, Value, and Change dimensions yield scores on an interval scale while the Control dimension yields a nominal score. With two comparison groups (non-sarcastic versus sarcastic conversations), match-paired t-tests were used to detect mean differences in the Quality, Value, and Change dimensions. Chi Square was used to detect differences in control dimension

Part One: Validity and Interrelation of Family Background Questionnaire Variables

Using statistical breakdowns provided by the Family Background Questionnaire, categorical determinations are made. The religious affiliation of Roman Catholic represented a majority segment (61.1%) within the sample population. While such a high level of affiliation to one specific religion might be strongly indicative of the historical population of the northeast region of the United States, it also suggests somewhat consistent patterns of upbringing. Intensity of association with any religion varied widely within the sample, suggesting that, for example, while someone may indicate that they are Roman Catholic, the levels of involvement varied on a family-by-family basis. Typical membership or affiliation with most catholic churches suggests weekly worship service attendance, baptism, and confirmation for new members of the church. Such consistency, even if not explicitly pronounced, would lend itself to a common culture shared by 6 out of every 10 participants. The rest of the population divided between 11 other selections (in decreasing order of representation): Jewish, Other (Protestant was the most common answer provided),

No religion, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Northern Baptist, Lutheran, and Southern Baptist. The religious make-up of this sample speaks to specific characteristics that define who this sample represents..

In terms of analyzing the population in terms of two largely represented groups, the gender percentages serve more effectively. With obvious gender specific concerns aside, creating male and female subdivisions isolates perspectives of a family experience that are undeniably unique. Men and women are treated differently in every aspect of their lives; to suggest that their upbringings would be the same across all families would be naïve and in extreme denial of our own childhoods. While the sample population was not evenly divided between men ($n = 57$, $P = 37.7\%$) and women ($n = 93$, $P = 61.6\%$), there was some consistency with the school-wide population of men ($n = 5952$, $P = 41.939\%$) and women ($n = 8240$, $P = 58.060\%$), becoming an effective microcosm in that regard. The greater number of women in the sample could have some effect on the characterizing a determination about young adult interpretation of sarcastic messages from their samples.

Subject reported Age and Ethnicity were other demographic features considered for analysis. The reported ages in the sample ($M = 19.84$, $N = 151$) ranged from 18 to 31. The population segment under the age of 21 ($n = 106$, $P = 70.2\%$), seemed to satisfy the pre-conditions for maintaining the idea encapsulated by the terminology *young adult*. The rest of the population, that representing 21 and older, fall outside of the young adult category by preliminary definition, but qualify nonetheless as mostly first year university students. While grouping these individuals

together under the traditional title *freshman* might be next appropriate step toward reclassification, observations concerning a transforming student body population have already begun. Administrative leaders at one northeastern university, Connecticut State, have already initiated the consideration of reclassifying their incoming students as “first-year students” rather than freshman, citing the whole idea of a freshman class as “more historic than actual.”² This group selected for inclusion with the rest of the sample.

The sample body was composed of a majority population segment that identified their “ethnic heritage” with the category of “European American ‘White’” (n= 136, 90.1%). The implications of such a dominant ethnic representation carry with them . Other population segments, in descending representations, were “African American” (n=8, 5.3 %), “Asian American” (n=4, 2.6%), and “Latin American (Hispanic)” (n= 2, 1.3%) While the six characterizations that could have been selected for describing one’s ethnic heritage are rather narrow, their was another option of “Other: _____” , that was not chosen by any of the subjects. The willingness of subjects to have themselves labeled as an “Other” would be obviously discouraging, but at the risk of overcomplicating the survey, the “Other” category complimented the previous choices as an alternative.

Testing Interfactor Relationships:

There are positive correlations between father’s typical sarcasm use and mother’s typical sarcasm use ($r = .449, p = .000$), indicating a relationship between

² “CSU considers dropping ‘freshman’ class” (May 9th, 2004) Retrieved <http://www.boston.com> on May 9th 2004.

parental communication strategies, at least in regards to sarcasm usage. There is also a positive correlation between satisfaction with father's communicative relationship and satisfaction with mother's communicative relationship ($r = .358, p = .000$). The two of these correlations suggest that a *systems* approach to family communication, as opposed to an individual *dyadic* perspective, is more appropriate for viewing this study.

There is a negative correlation between satisfaction with the father's communication and father's sarcasm ($r = -.444, p = .000$). This would indicate that the more intensely sarcastic the communication directed toward the young-adult, the greater the perception of a less satisfying relationship. Similarly, there is also a negative correlation between satisfaction with mother's communication and mother's sarcasm ($r = -.332, p = .000$). This consistency between mother and father correlations supports the previous set of correlations that examined the relationship between mother and father sarcasm and satisfaction.

There is a negative correlation between subject verbal aggressiveness and father's sarcasm ($r = -.224, p = .010$). This would suggest that as the subjects rate their fathers' typical communication toward them as more intensely sarcastic, self-reports of their own verbal aggressive tendencies tended higher. A partial correlation controlling for gender indicated that father's sarcasm intensity failed to show a great difference between the male subject's verbal aggressiveness ($r = -.174$) and female subject's verbal aggressiveness ($r = -.218$). The impact of gender on the relationship between verbal aggression and father's sarcasm was tested using forced-entry

regression. Verbal aggression was a significant predictor of father's sarcasm ($F_{1, 129} = 6.802$; $p = .010$, $r^2 = .05$). However, gender did not significantly improve the predictive power of the model ($F_{1, 128} = .910$; $p = .342$; change in $r^2 = .007$).

Interestingly, there is no such evidence suggesting a significant correlation between verbal aggressiveness and mother's sarcasm ($r = -.077$, $p = .382$). A partial correlation controlling for gender indicated that mother's sarcasm intensity failed to show a great difference between the male subject's verbal aggressiveness ($r = -.046$) and female subject's verbal aggressiveness ($r = -.094$). The impact of gender on the relationship between verbal aggression and mother's sarcasm was tested using forced-entry regression. Verbal aggression was not a significant predictor of mother's sarcasm ($F_{1, 147} = 1.469$; $p = .227$, $r^2 = .01$). Nevertheless, gender was inserted into the model and did not significantly improve the predictive power of the model ($F_{1, 147} = .006$; $p = .937$; change in $r^2 = .000$). These results, in regard to subject verbal aggressiveness, create an interesting inconsistency in regard to intensity of sarcastic communication used by mother and father.

Part Two: Examining the Communication Record

Comparing Two Records:

The Communication Record Packet is set up for mean comparisons of interpersonal communication variables between the two completed reports of sarcastic and non-sarcastic exchanges. When examining the four variables that attempt to account for interpersonal communication characteristics, one of the variables showed a significant association between its items, and two of the variables showed a significant

difference (See *Appendix of Tables*). The *Quality* variable showed a significant difference between the reported non-sarcastic exchanges ($M = 32.81$) and sarcastic exchanges ($M = 36.5563$). The *Change* variable showed a significant difference between the reported non-sarcastic exchanges ($M = 3.768$) and sarcastic exchanges ($M = 11.7285$). The *Control* variable, when removing from consideration “Accidental” and “Unclear” sources of control possibility, shows a X^2 association at $p = .0502$. In non-sarcastic exchanges, the respondent initiated the conversation 37.5% of the time, but only 31% of the time in sarcastic exchanges. The parent initiated the conversation in non-sarcastic exchanges 31.25% of the time while initiating sarcastic conversations 45.5% of the time. Initiation was mutual in 31.25% non-sarcastic exchanges, while it was mutual in 23.44% of the sarcastic exchanges. The X^2 test of association suggests a significant difference in initiation of conversations ($X^2 = 6.319$; $p = .042$). Control over the conversation also revealed a trend that approaches statistical significance in the difference between sarcastic and non-sarcastic conversations. The subject felt as though he/she was controlling non-sarcastic conversations 23.8% of the time, but only 13% of the time in sarcastic conversations. The subject viewed the parent in control 28.6% of the time in non-sarcastic conversations and 35.9% of the time in sarcastic conversations. *Control* was seen as mutual in 47.6% of the non-sarcastic conversations and 54% of the sarcastic conversations. The X^2 test of association suggests a trend in control of conversations ($X^2 = 5.902$; $p = .052$). Finally, ending conversations showed no evidence of difference between sarcastic and non-sarcastic conversations. The subject reported ending the non-sarcastic conversations 44.2% of

the time and the sarcastic conversations 43.3% of the time. Subjects reported that parents ended non-sarcastic conversations 19.8% of the time and sarcastic conversations 20% of the time. Finally, ending was seen as mutual in 35.9% of non-sarcastic conversations, and in 36.6% of the sarcastic conversations. The X^2 test of association did not indicate any differences in ending of conversations ($X^2 = 0.027$; $p = .987$). The *Value* variable showed no significant difference between non-sarcastic exchanges ($M = 23.0779$) and sarcastic exchanges ($M = 23.4702$).

Interpretation of the Episodes:

The *Episode Intention Survey (EIS)* attempted to align researched possible meanings with the subject's interpretation of parent/parent-figure sarcastic utterances. The subject population was divided into high and low verbally aggressive communicators (VAC). There was a significant difference with four of the 18 factors. For item #4 ("Was the speaker's intent to be humorous?"), there was a significant difference ($t = -2.163$, $p = .036$) between low VACs ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 1.798$) and high VACs ($M = 4.27$, $SD = 2.374$). For item #8 ("Was the speaker's intent to instruct?"), there was a significant difference ($t = 3.049$, $p = .004$) between low VACs ($M = 2.14$, $SD = 1.797$) and high VACs ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 2.058$). For item #15 ("Was the speaker's intent to anger you?"), there was a significant difference ($t = 2.168$, $p = .036$) between low VACs ($M = 1.23$, $SD = .889$) and high VACs ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.806$). For item #16 ("Was it the speaker's intent to offend you?"), there was a significant difference ($t = .877$, $p = .386$) between low VACs ($M = 1.14$, $SD = .478$) and high VACs ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.424$). The use of 18 t-tests inflates the possibility of Type I

error sufficiently to view these results as exploratory and requiring further corroboration before acceptance.

Hypothesis and Research Questions

Hypothesis 1:

Hypothesis 1 stated that securely attached participants will be the most comfortable with parent-young-adult directed sarcastic communication, reporting high levels of involvement and interaction, as well as high satisfaction in the relationship. In order to examine this, subject attachment style was viewed in relation to the variables of satisfaction, sarcasm, and parental control. Results indicated that Securely attached subjects were the second most satisfied with their fathers ($M = 12.015$, $SD = 1.044$) and their mothers ($M = 9.938$, $SD = .789$). Securely attached subjects did indicate the least intense levels of reported father sarcasm ($M = 17.923$, $SD = .618$), and were second only to Dismissive attached subjects in reported mother sarcasm ($M = 19.231$, $SD = .652$). Securely attached subjects reported the second lowest levels of parental control ($M = 39.938$, $SD = .510$). Due to lack of significance in ANOVA, this data instead suggests that as a trend these findings could be more conclusive with a more accurate measure or a larger sample body.

Hypothesis 2:

Hypothesis 2 stated that Preoccupied attached participants will be the least comfortable with parent sarcastic communication, reporting high levels of interaction and involvement, but low levels of satisfaction with the relationship. To examine this, the attachment style was looked at in comparison with levels of sarcastic

communication, levels of satisfaction, and parental control. Preoccupied attached subjects, when compared to the other attachment styles, reported the most intense levels of father sarcasm ($M = 15.375, SD = 1.761$), but only the third most intense levels of mother sarcasm ($M = 19.500, SD = 1.859$). Preoccupied attached subjects were the third most satisfied group with their father ($M = 14.375, SD = 2.967$), and the second most satisfied with their mother ($M = 11.375, SD = 2.266$). Preoccupied attached subjects reported the most parental control ($M = 40.669, SD = 1.453$). Due to lack of significance in ANOVA, this data instead suggests that as a trend these findings could be more conclusive with a more accurate measure or a larger sample body.

Hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3 stated that Dismissive attached participants would be the least affected by parent sarcastic communication, reporting low levels of interaction and involvement. This was examined by examining the relation between the attachment style, sarcastic communication, satisfaction with their relationship, and parental control. Dismissively attached subjects were the most satisfied with the relationship they had with their father ($M = 10.333, SD = 1.978$), but ranked third among the categories in satisfaction with their mother ($M = 11.500, SD = 1.511$). Dismissively attached subjects, when compared to the subjects categorized in the other three attachment styles, reported the second least intensely sarcastic communication used in typical interactions with their father ($M = 16.889, SD = 1.174$), and the third least intensely sarcastic communication with their mother ($M = 19.167, SD = 1.239$).

Dismissively attached subjects reported the lowest levels of parental control ($M = 39.889$, $SD = 0.969$) among the four attachment style groups, which is theoretically consistent with their need for independence. Due to lack of significance in correlation, this data instead suggests that as a trend these findings could be more conclusive with a more accurate measure or a larger sample body.

Hypothesis 4:

Hypothesis 4 stated that fearfully attached participants will have the most negative reaction to sarcastic communication, reporting the lowest level of satisfaction. This was examined through the relations between the attachment style, sarcastic communication behavior, and level of satisfaction. Fearfully attached participants were the least satisfied among the four attachment style categories with not only their father ($M = 14.577$, $SD = 1.651$), but also their mother ($M = 12.808$, $SD = 1.257$). Fearfully attached participants, when compared to the subjects categorized in the other three attachment styles, reported the most intensely sarcastic communication used in typical interactions with their mother ($M = 16.346$, $SD = 1.031$), but second to Preoccupied attached subjects for communication with their father ($M = 16.385$, $SD = .977$). Due to lack of significance in correlation, this data instead suggests that as a trend these findings could be more conclusive with a more accurate measure or a larger sample body.

Hypothesis 5:

Hypothesis 5a stated that participants that report themselves as more verbally aggressive will be less affected by family communication climates characterized by as more intensely sarcastic. A three-level segmentation of the sample body was made, creating high, low, and moderate verbal-aggressiveness groups. When comparing the high verbal-aggressiveness group to the low and moderate groups, there was a significant difference in means with father's reported intensity of sarcastic communication (Tukey α , $p = .019$) that did not exist with mother's reported intensity of sarcastic communication. A comparison of means seemed to indicate that levels of father sarcasm were least intense in the low verbal aggressiveness group ($M = 19.465$, $n = 43$), as compared to levels of father sarcasm intensity for both the moderate verbal aggressiveness group ($M = 15.490$, $n = 49$), and the high verbal aggressiveness group ($M = 16.564$, $n = 39$).

Hypothesis 5b stated that verbal aggressiveness would be least evident in the subject profiles of those characterized as having a Secure attachment style and that verbal aggressiveness would be most evident in the subject profiles of those characterized as having a Dismissive attachment style. Results indicated that while verbal aggressiveness totals were the second lowest among the four categories for subjects reporting Securely attached ($M = 46.323$, $SD = 1.281$), the Dismissively attached subjects were ranked the highest in verbal aggressiveness ($M = 50.059$, $SD = 2.504$). Due to lack of significance in this correlation, this data instead suggests that

as a trend these findings could be more conclusive with a more accurate measure or a larger sample body.

Research Question 1:

The first research question inquired as to how it is that young adults' experience sarcasm in their interactions with their parents. When a lack of significance between attachment style and any of the analyzing variables was shown, what remained were trends in the data that appeared to be reasonable consistent with Bartholomew and Horowitz's four quadrant organizational scheme. The plan of dividing the sample body into categories as to their learned behavioral relationship with their parents would have simplified the findings in regards to the various interpretations of sarcasm purpose. Details about specific communications seemed to have more implications about young adults and their interpretations of their parent's communications.

The last item of the *Episode Intention Survey*, #19 "What was the sarcastic remark..." provided an interesting look at the types of sarcastic messages that were actually spoken by parents to their young-adult offspring. In respect to the target, a great majority of the sarcastic comments were directed at the listener themselves ($n = 102$). Other possible targets, in descending order were other family members, friends of the listener, other (in general), the speaker, work, and one for the family pet. The sarcastic comments focused on a broad range of topics, yet there were apparent themes: financial issues were the most frequent topic, such as spending habits of the listener or the economic state of the family; the other topics, in descending order, were the

listener's education, the listener's personal life/social habits, listener's physical features, speaker's occupation, family (member) characteristics, and the family pet's hygiene. A representative sample list of these sarcastic comments can be seen in Appendix G.

Research Question 2:

The second research question asked how young adults perceive sarcastic interaction in relation to non-sarcastic interactions when communicating with their parent. The completion of two separate communication records, non-sarcastic and sarcastic exchanges, enabled certain distinctions to be made regarding young adult impressions. Young adults found that exchanges with their parents marked by at least one directed sarcastic utterance were significantly higher in quality, produced much greater of a change in their own feelings, and yet felt less control over the conversation. Non-sarcastic conversations and those marked by sarcasm were reported have no significant difference between their scores for the value of the exchange.

DISCUSSION

Summary

Sarcastic communication climates could be characterized by a host of communication behaviors. When looking at the sources, the influence of the father appeared to play perhaps the biggest role in the reported intensity and subsequent interpretation of the sarcastic utterances. Subject attachment style was not found to be significantly related to the use of sarcasm by the young adults' parents.

Correlations between reported father and mother intensity of sarcasm use were evident, as well as satisfaction with the relationship with father and mother. While reported father sarcasm intensity could be correlated to subject tendency for verbal aggression, reported mother sarcasm intensity could not. Further analysis indicated that Father Sarcasm intensity was reported as least in the segmented low verbal aggressiveness subject group. The notion that the father's typical communication directed at their young adult offspring is more likely to be found sarcastic by those subjects characterized by more verbally aggressive tendencies is interesting and sets up further analysis and discussion.

Consistent with Infante et al.(1986)'s characterization of verbal aggressiveness is that it is *trait*: a personality aspect that falls under assertiveness in line with the structure of Costa and McCrae's (1980) trait model of personality. Therefore when attempting to understand why young adults characterized by low verbal aggressiveness would report low levels of sarcasm intensity, we can speculate as to patterns of communication that have been created between the father and their young adult offspring. Beatty and Dobos (1992) operationalized the factor of *Sarcasm* by three items: Sarcastic-Not Sarcastic, Hypocritical-Consistent, and Insulting-Praising. For moderate and high verbal aggressiveness communicators (whose means for father sarcasm intensity were extremely close), the creation of destructive patterns of communication over time could reasonably lend to low scores (1= Most Sarcastic, 1= Most Hypocritical, 1= Most Insulting) in the three items above. Young adults found

to be less prone to verbal aggression seem less likely to have incurred destructive patterns of communication with their father.

How the relationship between the listener and the speaker is defined and where and what they see common ground (Clark and Marshall, 1981; Clark, Schreuder, and Buttrick, 1983) theoretically effects the discourses that are shared and how they are internalized. The traditional role of the father, that of a disciplinarian, as opposed to the mother, that of a nurturer would appear to be an explanation for how such figures in ones' own family are ultimately perceived and what is expected of them. If young adults, struggling for independence of choice in their affairs, perceive their father's influence as counterproductive to this, conflict may result.

Hocker and Wilmot (1991) acknowledge the metaphorical nature of conflict, as it applies to our search for creative conflict management: "Language choices about conflict may suggest some of the problems that are at issue, the view the parties maintain of what conflict is, and how they think conflict may be managed." (p. 22)

Analysis of individual sarcastic utterances, as provided by the *EIS #19*, "What was the sarcastic remark...", suggested that parent-young adult relations are riddled with conflicts particular to the family context: financial concerns particular to the high cost of providing a higher education for one's children, personal concerns about use of one's free time, and complicated feelings about their young-adult offspring leaving the house to attend college, where they are to make more decisions for themselves than they ever have before.

How the subjects interpret the sarcasm usage differed significantly from communication completely devoid of sarcasm. Subjects felt more in control of non-sarcastic conversations, and they were also more likely to initiate these conversations. Conversely, sarcastic conversations were more likely to be initiated and controlled by the parent/parent-figure. Sarcastic communications were found to have significantly less communication quality as well as result in much greater of a change in the subject's feelings. Interestingly, the perceived value of the interaction did not differ in sarcastic and non-sarcastic communications. In terms of distinguishing between task-talk and assessing depth in the relationship, the perceived value of the interaction stayed consistent, as subjects interpreted sarcastic communications as having no more (or no less) of a deeper purpose or significance than that of the non-sarcastic communication.

When constructing the first research question, it was the opinion of this researcher, supported by practical experience and the implications of scholarly research that the type of person affected by their relationships with their parents are what varies the usage and purpose of this form of non-literal language use. There is no statistically significant indication that verbal aggression or levels of reported mother or father sarcasm intensity are particularly tied to one attachment style or another. While this could fault the ability of attachment style to predict intensity of sarcasm usage, particularly in relation to aggressive communication, it suggests a larger issue. Any way one chooses to look at it, sarcasm purpose lies in the

interpretation as it relates to the context, and inherent in this idea, is the expectation and responsibility placed on the speaker by the listener.

Due to the relatively large group of instruments implemented to carry out this study, there were some interesting associations that were not anticipated as original hypotheses, but are consistent with the general pattern of thought put forth by the researcher. In particular, the Communication Record provided some interesting statistics concerning the comparison of sarcastic and non-sarcastic exchanges. Also, the interpretations of the sarcastic utterances had interesting implications for viewing sarcasm in relation to parent directed messages to their young adult offspring.

Statistical Results

While the obvious connections that were attempted to be established between attachment style and prevalence of sarcastic communication were not made apparent by the statistical evidence, there is concurrent evidence to suggest that the original arguments should not yet be abandoned. The belief that there would be a relation between verbal aggressiveness and reported typical sarcasm usage held up, and appeared to indicate a relation that would have implications for attachment theory. The perceived difference between how the subjects felt about conversations devoid of sarcasm with their parent compared to conversations with at least one sarcastic utterance showed significant along three of four relational dimensions.

Verbal aggressiveness, when compared to Family Sarcastic Climate, a composite variable of subject's reported Father and Mother sarcasm dimension in the Beatty and Dobos (1992) scale, appeared (upon first analysis) to indicate a positive

curvilinear trend. This would have indicated that there is a high level of sarcasm when the subject characterizes themselves as having high levels of aggressive communication, as well as when the subject characterized themselves as having low levels of aggressive communication. While this study hoped to further line up attachment styles with such a graph, these results could have indicated two unique categories of sarcastic communication climate.

Following further inquiry, it was determined that within a certain segment of the population ($n = 19$) there was an absence of a father figure, and that this was ultimately accounting for this anomaly. While the statistics were not significant, comparisons of the verbal aggressiveness means for those subjects with a father figure ($M = 52.7895$) and those without a father figure ($M = 46.7863$) appeared to indicate a intriguing trend. Higher verbal aggression scores for subjects reporting a lack of father figure could have implications for certain control elements in their family life. A larger sample or more accurate instrument would be able to define the relationship more clearly, but indications seem to point to the potential for the creation of a sarcastic interaction interpretation model.

The *Episode Interpretation Survey (EIS)* was used to determine if certain interpretations of the sarcastic utterance/interaction were more prevalent at certain points of the scale than others. Understandings of the nature of verbal aggression in communication would appear to illustrate a trend in which certain sarcastic utterance interpretations would be more prevalent at higher levels of verbal aggressiveness. In order to illustrate a subject population of vastly different verbal aggressiveness

tendency, the population body was segmented into three groups. These groups, quantitatively separated by into high ($VA > 53$), low ($VA \leq 42$), moderate ($42 \leq VA < 53$) levels, carry interesting implications when examining interpretive expectation. For contrasting and even somewhat dramatic effect, looking at the high verbal aggressiveness group's average interpretations vs. the low verbal aggressiveness group's average interpretations yield four significant factors that each individually carry different qualitative and quantitative implications.

Analyzing the implications of the factors, or in the case of the *EIS*, the questions, four significant items became apparent. There was a significant difference for item #15 ("Was it the speaker's intent to anger you?") ($t = 2.168, p = .036$); the high verbal aggressiveness segment was more likely to interpret sarcastic comments as intended to anger them ($M = 2.19$), as opposed to the low verbal aggressiveness segment (mean = 1.23). Further, there was a significant difference for item #16 ("Was it the speaker's intent to offend you?") ($t = 2.179, p = .035$); the high verbal aggressive segment was more likely to interpret sarcastic comments as intended to offend them ($M = 1.85$), while the low verbal aggressiveness group was less likely in this regard ($M = 1.14$). The differences between these mean scores by factor seem to suggest that there lacks a great distinction, yet the nature of the question and its relation to this studies implicated goals create a peaked brow of curiosity.

More deliberate distinctions are obvious when the remaining two significant factors are revealed. There was a significant difference for item #4 ("Was the speaker's intent to be humorous?") ($t = -2.163, p = .036$); the low verbal

aggressiveness segment was more likely to interpret sarcastic comments as intended humor ($M=5.66$), as opposed to the high verbal aggressiveness segment ($M=4.27$). Additionally, there was a significant difference for item #8 (“Was the speaker’s intent to instruct?”) ($t=3.049, p=.004$); the low verbal aggressiveness segment was less likely to interpret sarcastic utterances as having an instructional purpose ($M=2.14$), while those with high verbal aggressiveness seemed more likely ($M=3.95$). Taking these two responses by the high verbal aggressiveness segment in context with whole 7-point bipolar adjective scale format, could lend toward interpretation of such means as *neutral* responses. Each of the mean reports for the high verbal aggressiveness segments have high standard deviations, indicating that they are not necessarily true neutral scores, rather a widely spread average around that point.

This data collected by the Communication Record produced definite and significant results. There were significant differences between the two communication records in *Quality* of the communication and the *Change* brought about by the interaction. A significant distinction between the two communication records was observed between items in the *Control* variable of interaction. Interestingly there was no significant difference in the *Value* of the communication. The implications of this determination require discussion of each of the elements individually.

The mean reports for the *Quality* factor, significantly differed ($p=.002$) between conversations reported devoid of sarcasm ($M=32.81$) and conversations in which sarcasm played a factor ($M=36.5563$). This is a rather curious finding, considering conventional belief would appear to dictate that the negative implications

of sarcastic communication. That young adult offspring would find conversations with their parent containing sarcastic utterance(s) of greater value suggests more than convention. A possible implication of this is that the use of sarcasm requires some level of common understanding; when a sarcastic utterance is used it makes an implication that refers to past shared experiences, expectations, or intentions. Conversation under such prescriptions would in essence have an increased sense of depth and purpose.

The difference in *Change* reported between non-sarcastic and sarcastic conversations was significant ($p = .000$). The mean scores for this factor illustrate the most dramatic difference among the four variables. Non-sarcastic conversations reported rather low levels of overall change ($M = 3.768$), while sarcastic conversations conversely reported high levels of overall change ($M = 11.7285$). Implications of this result fall into similar lines of reason as that for the *Quality* variable. The idea that sarcasm requires a common reference (Clark and Gerrig, 1984), in which there is some shared ownership, would imply that there is some level of personal investment made by each participant. Comments that violate expectations regarding truthfulness and sincerity are by nature designed to create an effect on the listener, especially if they are forms of indirect aggression or criticism. In this regard, a non-literal utterance can “sneak under the radar”, and only after interpretation have its true intentions revealed.

The difference in *Value* between non-sarcastic and sarcastic conversations was not significant ($p = .586$). The means, while indicating a slightly greater value

indicated for sarcastic conversations, failed to indicate a great separation between non-sarcastic ($M = 23.0779$) and sarcastic conversations ($M = 23.4702$). The Value variable is meant to assess the “value of the interaction for the future of the relationship”, the results appear to indicate that whether sarcasm is present in the conversation or not, there appears to be no influence on how viable the relationship is. This could verify that for this context, family communication between parent and young adult, the presence of sarcasm has no bearing on the future potential of interaction. Essential, however the subject and their parent figure communicate, they are stuck with it.

The different aspects of *Control* presented five different possibilities for who managed either the sarcastic or non-sarcastic communication being recorded. Answers coded 2 “Accidental” and 4 “Not Clear” were in such few proportions and conceptually inconsistent with evaluating sarcastic utterance. The most important difference between conversations occurs when comparing who initiates conversations with a sarcastic component. Subjects reported that they were more likely than their parents to initiate non-sarcastic conversations while the parents were more likely to initiate conversations that include sarcasm. There are a number of intriguing post hoc explanations for this discrepancy. First, it seems possible that power plays a role in the difference. Presuming that parents have more power than their young adult children, particularly in terms of resources and reward power, as well as expertise coming from greater years of experience (French and Raven, 1959), children may feel unwilling to initiate conversations that are likely to turn aggressive when they start in

a lower power position. The trend shown where parents are more likely to control sarcastic exchanges than non-sarcastic exchanges is consistent with this view. Second, as late adolescents, the subjects may be more likely to use or interpret parental comments as sarcastic when the parent initiates the conversation. It may be that the topic is intrusive or the adolescent is not interested in conversation at that time, so they use sarcasm as a tool to end the conversation quickly.

The statistical results, trends, and actual sarcasm utterance portray the young adult as being receptive to the use of sarcasm by both their mother and father. While the tendencies for verbal aggression in young adults proved to be more of an indicator of the father's use of sarcasm, it is reasoned that the instrument used was not sensitive enough to account for a greater range of sarcasm intentions, most likely representative of that used by the mother. The perception of how the parent is more in control of sarcastic conversations, especially the initiation of such, points at sarcasm's use in terms of a greater conflict over power in the relationship between parent(s) and their young adult offspring. While this study accounted for intensity of control, a more articulated model of control style and role in parenting might help clarify the perception of sarcasm intention to achieve compliance and subjugation. The perception of sarcastic conversations as having greater quality, causing a greater level of change, and having approximately the same value as non-sarcastic conversations validates positive perceptions of sarcasm use, such as humor and tension relief, and the need to account for the full range of usage in parent to young adult directed communication.

Limitations of the Study

Conceptual

The approach to this study's conclusions can be viewed and justified from several perspectives. The majority of the research conducted on sarcasm uses examples pulled from interviews, interaction analysis, or previous studies that have restricted the interpretation of sarcasm as negative, despite evidence that suggests otherwise. Researchers have questioned the logic of studies of dyads or small groups that attempt to come to conclusions about the entire entity, while only accounting for one perspective. Impressions developed by one member of a group regarding the entire experience of being involved in relationship can be inaccurate regarding the entire situation, especially if the relationship could not be regarded as consistent. Finally, random or [outside] circumstances regarding family relations or individuals with the family, as infrequent as they would be in relation to the sample size, can fall outside of bounds of what the survey instrument is capable of.

Developing a way of looking at certain types of communication, especially if an opinion is held in the majority, is difficult to initiate and eventually process. Beatty and Dobos (1992) developed a instrument for evaluating the adult son reported typical communication of their father with the intention of understanding prevalence for certain communicative behaviors from a very influential figure in a child's development. Factors of *Criticism* and *Sarcasm* were conceptually positioned opposed to a factor of *Supportive/Informative* communication, based on the qualitative essay reports on the types of messages and interactions adult son's have with their

father. The factor of *Sarcasm* was accounted for by the combined scores of three bi-polar adjective scale items: Sarcastic-Unsarcastic, Hypocritical-Consistent, and Insulting-Praising. While these items do pay regard to several researched perspectives on the implications of sarcasm usage and perceived intention, there is ultimately a discrepancy. This scale has no way of accounting for positive applications of sarcasm and their subsequent interpretations. The follow-up study (Beatty and Dobos, 1994) accounted for sarcasm by the combined scores of five bi-polar adjective scales items: Sarcastic-Unsarcastic, Hypocritical-Consistent, Insulting-Praising, Gentle-Harsh, and Hostile-Amiable. These scale items may provide a more representative definition of possible perceptions of sarcasm, but they similarly provide a narrow representation of how sarcasm can be interpreted.

The perspective from which this research is attempting to account for the “family” experience, through the experience of one member, has potential liabilities. Leslie Baxter (1988) has characterized what appears to be a pandemic condition of “ecological fallacy” in which interpersonal researchers fall back on the insight of one member of group. When the “information provided by the partner s generalized to the dyad” there are obvious components that are excluded from the relationship equation that need to be at the very least considered to provide adequate feel for a given observable context.

In relation to our current study, the factors that are due consideration lie manly away from the recipient of sarcastic messages and even the message itself despite obvious implications. The speaker or sender of sarcasm s not generally accounted for

in regards to typical interactions with their offspring or even in regards to their actual utterance. Previous studies especially that of Toplak and Katz (2000) centered on this very difficulty. While results would indicate that there is a fair amount of consideration due to what was actually to implied by the utterance upon its creation and who actually creates the message a reasonable amount of variance in this regard was controlled for by the scope of this research. This study examines family communication typically between mother or father and their young adult offspring implying not only the unique relationship of that family communication carries but also leaves a range of typical communication patterns that commonly exist between the modern North American family. While societal norms, due to the passage of time, should hardly be considered a constant, fixation on particular age groups certainly restricts the sample body to a certain undeniable generational common ground.

The ability of a researcher to conduct multiple and varying kinds of research with varying implied importance, has to be as much of a ego check as it is practicality. Not all relationships are as effective or significant as they need to be, and perhaps not all studies, for the purposes of the time or progress within the particular field, need to be. As hierarchy (seminal texts) and order (discipline/focus) is natural in any categorical pattern of organization, so much be the discrimination of the just how the study's measures answer the questions it asks. With this light, perhaps the most vivid inquiries come at the expense of the how actual interactions are portrayed. The Iowa Communication Record (Duck et al., 1991) has served as an eager template for the collection of relevant information surrounding the entire experience of a dyadic

interaction. Necessary elements paid particular attention by this measure, neglected by perhaps more primitive instruments, are control and change in the relationship factors. The nature and depth of this thesis ultimately stunted the potential of longitudinal study for the ICR, as repeated actual interactions would no doubt have solidified perhaps the most impressively significant of the findings. It is cruelly ironic in the sense that so much time was spent exploring the implications of other variables, and the most relevant were relegated to a “take-home” afterthought.

A worth mentioning limitation that is of no direct fault of the study itself, instead shared by all research restricted to this population, are all of the inherent quirks and angst of the young adult personality. The natural changes that child progresses through to assert their individuality and test the limits of their own identity create forms of “Interpersonal Struggles”. Conflicts between parental figures and young adults arise due to finite levels of power and self-esteem considerations. (Hocker and Wilmot, 1991) Most family situations shift leverage in the favor of the parents, who traditionally carry the burden of responsibility for the families’ economic and physical well-being.

Instrumental

This research study finds limitations throughout its application and in the scope of what it attempted to accomplishment. Through the implementation of several different instruments, a significant amount of theoretical and conceptual ground was covered. This research was constructed with certain assumptions made about the perspectives of the young adults on their own experience within their family, as well

as within certain percepts for the “target family”. While certain measures were naturally perfect fits for the sample population, others seemed to be constraining or not representing the particular discourse of the study group. What follows is a breakdown of certain elements that affect the reach of this study’s implications conceptually, as well as learned limitations of the instruments used.

Issues with the Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) Attachment Style measure created sense of confusion that affected a noteworthy percentage of the population. Several participants either asked or by misinterpretation assumed that they were supposed to put numbers next to each of the statements describing each attachment style prototype. Also, requests for subjects to differentiate between what prototype was most like them was to no avail, as 18% of the population responded to multiple prototypes with the highest answer given (ex. Preoccupied and Fearful both received 7s). This could ultimately have been the factor that affected the ability for attachment style to be significantly tied to reported father/mother sarcasm intensity of usage.

The *Family Background Questionnaire (FBQ)* was an effective instrument for examining certain variables in relation to larger categorizations, particularly Attachment Style, but was compromised in some respects by the originally intended target population. While Melchert (1991) seemed to have arranged the questionnaire a little over a decade past, families seem to have become much more of an uncertainty. Particularly, the whole section on parents and biological parents was confusing for some subjects. While the answers were easy to provide and were given, the parent or parent-figure they were supposed to use for the rest of the study was not as directly

indicated as one would like. General confusion was made aware to the researcher in several classes, and was immediately clarified to the rest of the participants.

The sensitivity and specificity was also an issue in two separate instances on the *FBQ*. There were two participants that made an issue with the appropriateness of “11) Unemployed, On Welfare”, regarding the grouping of the economic categories “Unemployed” and “On Welfare” in the same category. This perhaps suggests a negative connotation that may be implied by one and not the other, but for the sake of preserving participant privacy, clarifications were not sought at that time.

Where certain answers to questions were not provided, a few participants took it upon themselves to insert their own answers. Specifically, in the Father and Mother response for #20 and #21, “My mother and father told me that they loved me _____”, several subjects wrote in their own answer of “Every day”. While the answer indicating the most frequent amount of answer “At least once a month” would appear to cover this answer, there was an obvious distinction that the subject wanted to make. This need for an additional answer is consistent in for the following numbers: 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27.

Certain questions could have clarified what type of an answer it was that they were looking for. On the *FBQ*, there could have been a distinction made for #60 “What kind of grades did you get in school?” For instance, most subjects responded with letter grades, such as “As, some Bs”. A few subjects responded with an answer along a 4.0 scale, reflecting a grading system widely used for college level academics. Still another small portion of the subject pool responded with qualitative descriptors,

such as “good” or “okay”. Ultimately for some participants, the ambiguity associated with certain questions could, over the course of the survey packet, create an apprehension that could affect accurate results.

As an overall impression of the *FBQ*, certain types of questions seemed to be articulating the details surrounding a rather middle to upper-class type of lifestyle. While this would seem to be a survey wide issue, for specific consideration, Items #72-83 reflect certain ranges of lifestyle choices that may have not been available to households that were more economically challenged. The survey is designed to function to the largest population possible, inquiries need to be made as to what perspectives does these questions alienate. The participants who feels as if the study is not meant for them due to sections of questions that he or she simple does not know how or is incapable of answering, is lost as subject and as a perspective worth examining.

Future Research Directions

Perspectives of reported parent and young adult interaction provided by this study appear to suggest the need for a more complete way of articulating the full range of sarcastic utterance intention. While researchers have done an ample job portraying possible linguistic forms that sarcastic utterances can take, implications for how these utterances aid or complicate family function cannot be weighed completely until the importance of positive function is gauged as well. Findings of the *EIS* #19 “What was the sarcastic remark...” seemed to provide a fair representation of ways in which parents have used sarcasm to relieve tension or stress, facilitate the discussion of

sensitive topics, and remind the family members of norms that very well define the group itself.

Examining sarcasm despite these very real uses and interpreted meanings may have been effective for creating dramatic and relevant results, but fail to tell the whole story. Denying the positive, enabling, or identifying purposes of sarcasm unfairly marginalized not only these very real and relevant meanings, but also the experience that is shared by those who utilize sarcasm in this manner. The development of a complete and operational perspective on sarcasm usage, taking into account the positive implications would be the next step for further study. Enough research has been conducted by non-literal language scholars to argue for a broader definition and a more complete understanding.

The implications for creating a more complete distinction between the positive and negative meanings that sarcasm can have are many. Reported typical sarcasm usage was least intense by subjects within the low verbal aggression category. To suggest that perhaps the trait verbal aggression of young adults is contributing to their father's perceived sarcasm (re: negative intention) usage, furthers speculation that this message exchange is creating destructive patterns of communication. Infante et al. (1986) had indicated that *argumentative skill deficiency* could be a possible reason for verbally aggressive communication behavior: "individuals resort to verbal aggression because they lack the verbal skills for dealing with social conflict constructively". (pg. 62) As communication studies researchers, designing a method by which those within

negative intention sarcastic climates can develop alternative means for dealing with social conflict could reduce the harmful effects of said language.

Accounting for the mother's sarcasm usage and intention also points toward another direction of inquiry. As reported typical sarcasm use intensity correlated positively between mother and father, the discrepancy between these scores and subject verbal aggression stood out. If roles and conventional views of the father and mother can have an effect on the how messages are perceived, an implication of the lack of significance between mother's typical sarcasm usage intensity and subject verbal aggression could be that mothers have different perceived intentions for the language. Examples of the sarcastic remarks provided by the EIS would appear to indicate that there are enough examples to support this idea. A study that looks at how subjects' mothers are perceived in relation to the typical communication of mothers and the function of their sarcastic utterances could support the idea that they have different reasons for speaking sarcastically.

The perceived value of communication with at least one sarcastic remark in comparison to communication devoid of sarcasm creates a series of further questions. The interpersonal communication variable of *Value* examined the perceived value of the conversation in relation the future of the relationship. The nature of the family context could dictate that the future of the relationship is assured and therefore would not be threatened or easily escaped. It would be an interesting research study to examine this hypothesis for peer or work groups as well. Peer and work relations are less inclined to permanence, and depending on the perceived intention of the sarcastic

utterance, the *Value* could differ significantly. These groups could also be sources of unique dynamics that could be differentiated by their own specific patterns of sarcasm use, and would be of great interest for expanding a complete understanding.

Conclusions

Considering the substantial influence our daily interactions have in how we not only perceive each other but also ourselves, the ramifications for a body of people who have do not possess a clear understanding of what is actually being told to them or what is coming out of their mouths is staggering. The observations of negative sarcastic utterances within families, especially demonstrated by the reported communicative behaviors of the father, have an effect on the satisfaction of a young adult in their family. While the observations regarding negative sarcasm use by the mother were less conclusive, there is reason to believe that a more exact instrument might clarify the types of sarcastic messages that they use.

The measurement of attachment style was not effective in establishing significant relationships to specific reported levels of sarcasm use, satisfaction, or parental control. The theoretical implications set forth by attachment theory would appear to suggest that a relation is possible, and the sizeable percentage of undifferentiated subjects would lend to the selection of another method for analyzing this relation. The connection between mother and child, upon which attachment theory is based, may not have been consistent with the factor used for measuring typical sarcasm use.

This work represents a clarification regarding not only sarcastic language usage and interpretation in general, but also how non-literal and verbally aggressive language effects the family communication environment. While research seems to indicate that there is an overall negative effect in classrooms, businesses, peer environments, and home contexts with small children, how to evaluate sarcasms complete interpretation still needs greater clarification.

Table 1: Demographic Statistics: Age, Gender, Religion

| Age | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 18 | 43 | 28.5 | 28.5 | 28.5 |
| 19 | 29 | 19.2 | 19.2 | 47.7 |
| 20 | 34 | 22.5 | 22.5 | 70.2 |
| 21 | 23 | 15.2 | 15.2 | 85.4 |
| 22 | 14 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 94.7 |
| 23 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 96.7 |
| 24 | 2 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 98 |
| 25 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 98.7 |
| 27 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 99.3 |
| 31 | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 100 |
| Total | 151 | 100 | 100 | |

| Gender | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Female | 93 | 61.6 | 61.6 | 61.6 |
| Male | 57 | 37.7 | 37.7 | 99.3 |
| Invalid Answer | 1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 100 |
| Total | 151 | 100 | 100 | |

| Religion | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| No Religion | 8 | 5.3 | 5.4 | 5.4 |
| Episcopal | 7 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 10.1 |
| Jewish | 14 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 19.5 |
| Lutheran | 2 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 20.8 |
| Methodist | 3 | 2 | 2 | 22.8 |
| Morman | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Northern Baptist | 2 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 24.2 |
| Pentecostal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Presbyterian | 6 | 4 | 4 | 28.2 |
| Roman Catholic | 91 | 60.3 | 61.1 | 89.3 |
| Southern Baptist | 2 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 90.6 |
| Other | 14 | 9.3 | 9.4 | 100 |
| Total | 149 | 98.7 | 100 | |
| Missing | 2 | 1.3 | | |
| | 151 | 100 | | |

Table 2: Demographic Statistics: Ethnicity and Attachment Style

| Ethnicity | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| African American | 8 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| Arab American | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5.3 |
| Asian American | 4 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 8 |
| European American ("White") | 136 | 90.1 | 90.7 | 98.7 |
| Latin American ("Hispanic") | 2 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100 |
| Native American | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Other | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Missing | 1 | 0.7 | | |
| Total | 151 | 100 | | |

| Attachment Style | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Secure | 72 | 47.7 | 48 | 48 |
| Dismissive | 25 | 16.6 | 16.7 | 64.7 |
| Preoccupied | 12 | 7.9 | 8 | 72.7 |
| Fearful | 26 | 17.2 | 17.3 | 90 |
| Undifferentiated | 15 | 9.9 | 10 | 100 |
| Missing | 1 | 0.7 | | |
| Total | 151 | 100 | | |

Table 3: Verbal Aggression vs. Father/Mother Sarcasm Intensity: ANOVA

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|-------|
| Father Sarcasm | Between Groups | 25.063 | 1 | 25.063 | 0.955 | 0.331 |
| | Within Groups | 2255.83 | 86 | 26.231 | | |
| | Total | 2280.9 | 87 | | | |
| Mother Sarcasm | Between Groups | 6.062 | 1 | 6.062 | 0.253 | 0.616 |
| | Within Groups | 2400.02 | 100 | 24 | | |
| | Total | 2406.08 | 101 | | | |

Table 4: Verbal Aggression vs. Attachment Style: ANOVA

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | Noncent. Parameter | Observed Power |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----|----------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Corrected Model | 640.808 | 4 | 160.202 | 1.419 | 0.231 | 5.676 | 0.433 |
| Intercept | 231513.141 | 1 | 231513.141 | 2051 | 0 | 2050.515 | 1 |
| DETATTST | 640.808 | 4 | 160.202 | 1.419 | 0.231 | 5.676 | 0.433 |
| Error | 16258.306 | 144 | 112.905 | | | | |
| Total Corrected | 353598.000 | 149 | | | | | |
| Total | 16899.114 | 148 | | | | | |

Table 5: Comparison of Non-Sarcastic and Sarcastic Communication Records

| | Non-sarcastic CR | | Sarcastic CR | | Sig. of Difference |
|----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | Standard dev. | Mean | Standard dev. | |
| Quality | 32.8146 | 11.09258 | 36.5563 | 13.6941 | 0.002 |
| Value | 23.0779 | 7.02219 | 23.4702 | 7.93373 | 0.586 |
| Change | 3.7682 | 4.71232 | 11.7285 | 4.19672 | 0.00 |

APPENDIX A

The University of Rhode Island
 Department of Communication Studies
 308A Independence Hall
 Kingston, Rhode Island 02881-0811

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

You have been asked to take part in a research project entitled "Sarcastic Family Climates: Self-reported evaluations of family interaction, effect of non-literal communication, and attachment style" described below. The researcher will explain the project to you in detail. You should feel free to ask questions. If you have more questions later, call Dr. Geoff Leatham, the person mainly responsible for this study, at (401) 874-4735, and he will discuss them with you. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this research project.

Description of the project:

You have been asked to take part in a study that is concerned with how you might be attached to your parents, how you might communicate with them, and what your parents might mean when they use sarcastic comments. The purpose of this study is furthering information on the different ways that sarcasm can be interpreted, if looked at in families. Sarcasm, as defined for this study, can be described as a statement that is the opposite of what is known or believed, and spoken about something (this could be a person, place, thing, event, or something spoken).

What will be done:

If you decide to take part in this study, here is what will happen: You are asked to participate in filling out a take-home survey packet. The first part of the packet will ask you to fill in basic information about your family, such how many parents or parent figures are a part of your family, how involved these people are in your life, and how you feel about their involvement. The second part asks for your views on how your parent(s) or parent figure(s) communicate with you, and how pleased or not pleased you are with this communication. The third and final part asks that after you speak with your parent or parent figure, you fill in details on your interpretations of that talk. You are asked to do this final part twice, once for a conversation that has no sarcasm, and once for a conversation that has sarcasm. The total time for completion of the first and second part is about one hour. The third part should take about 30 minutes per talk with your parent or parent figure. A collection list with an eight-digit identification code will be passed around for matching up the collection of all of the various survey forms that you will be given. This list will be shredded at the end of the collection time, and most importantly, before your responses are studied. This action does not make this research anonymous, but ensures your confidentiality. The research data will be kept for at least three years following the completion of the study, and then shredded after this time.

Risks or discomfort:

While the researchers do not intend your participation in this study to cause any discomfort or unnecessary risk, remembering experiences or feelings about family life could be a sensitive topic for some. Should you decide not to participate, your decision will not affect your grade in the course in any way.

Benefits of this study:

Although there will be no direct benefit to you for taking part in this study, the researcher may learn more about the variables being looked at. These variables may overlap, as they try to understand the relationship between parent and young adult, how satisfied they are in this relationship, and the presence and purpose of sarcasm. Looking at these factors may provide more information as to how sarcasm can be interpreted as a positive and humorous way of speaking, or also as a negative and

destructive way of speaking. You will further have the experience of being a participant in a research study.

Confidentiality:

Your part in this study is confidential. While you will be given an identification number for the purpose of organizing the surveys and also providing any extra credit points for your class, the list that these names are on will be destroyed as soon as the collection period is over. The researcher will collect all consent forms without perusing any of them. All other forms, including the consent form (signature) form, will be stored and kept for three years following the end of the study in the faculty supervisor's filing cabinet; after this time, all forms will be shredded.

In case there is any injury to the subject:

If this study causes you any injury, you should write or call the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, Research and Outreach, 70 Lower College Road, University of Rhode Island, telephone: (401) 874-4328.

Decision to quit at any time:

The decision to take part in this study is up to you. You do not have to participate. If you decide to take part in the study, it remains your option to quit at any time. Whatever you decide will in no way penalize you personally, effect your grade, or your status as a student. If you wish to quit, simply inform Dr. Geoff Leatham at (401) 874-4735 of your decision.

Rights and Complaints:

If you are not satisfied with the way that this study is performed, you may discuss your complaints with Dr. Geoff Leatham or with Gary Beck at (401) 874-7447 or gbeck@etal.uri.edu anonymously, if you choose. In addition, you may contact the office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies, Research and Outreach, 70 Lower College Road, Suite 2, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, telephone: (401) 874-4328.

You have read the Consent Form. Your questions have been answered. Your signature on this form means that you understand the information and you agree to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher

Typed/printed Name

Typed/printed name

Date

Date

APPENDIX B

| Family Climates Survey Extra Credit Verification Sheet | | Class: Date: | | | |
|---|------|-----------------|----------|------|-------|
| ID# | Name | Email Address | ID# | Name | Email |
| ABCD0101 | | | ABCD0121 | | |
| ABCD0102 | | | ABCD0122 | | |
| ABCD0103 | | | ABCD0123 | | |
| ABCD0104 | | | ABCD0124 | | |
| ABCD0105 | | | ABCD0125 | | |
| ABCD0106 | | | ABCD0126 | | |
| ABCD0107 | | | ABCD0127 | | |
| ABCD0108 | | | ABCD0128 | | |
| ABCD0109 | | | ABCD0129 | | |
| ABCD0110 | | | ABCD0130 | | |
| ABCD0111 | | | ABCD0131 | | |
| ABCD0112 | | | ABCD0132 | | |
| ABCD0113 | | | ABCD0133 | | |
| ABCD0114 | | | ABCD0134 | | |
| ABCD0115 | | | ABCD0135 | | |
| ABCD0116 | | | ABCD0136 | | |
| ABCD0117 | | | ABCD0137 | | |
| ABCD0118 | | | ABCD0138 | | |
| ABCD0119 | | | ABCD0139 | | |
| ABCD0120 | | | ABCD0140 | | |

APPENDIX C

Your ID: _____
Age: _____
Sex: M or F (circle one)

Family Communication Survey Packet

This study is interested in what kinds of communication behaviors exist in the family setting. Daily functioning, information sharing, and task accomplishment are all ways in which families need to communicate in order to operate effectively and ultimately exist. Your participation will help this research determine what types of communication exists in family settings, and how effective it is.

In the following pages you will be presented with a number of short questionnaires and surveys. The first will examine what type of family you belong to and how often you interact when you are together. The second survey will examine how direct and forward communication can be in family interaction, particularly between the parent and yourself. You will be asked to rate on a scale how close you agree with a given set of adjectives about your family situation.

The study also asks that after the surveys are completed, individuals take with them a final communication record sheet. After the completion of the first parts, a packet will be passed out. These sheets will serve as a way of evaluating actual communication behaviors between the parent(s) and yourself. Your participation can help provide clear and realistic examples of parent-young adult interaction.

Before you begin, please feel free to look over the entire packet. This will give you a general feel for the types of information that is being asked for. If you occasionally feel uncertain about how to answer, simply use your best judgments. There are no *right or wrong* answers; the research is only interested in your perceptions. Please be sure to provide a rating for each item.

Thank you for your participation.

Your ID: _____

Age: _____

Sex: M or F (circle one)

Family Background Questionnaire (FBQ)

Instructions: Please answer each question according to your experiences *before the age of 18*. If there is no answer that is exactly right, circle the answer that is closest to what you remember happening in your family.

Your age: _____

Gender: 1. Female 2. Male

Which of the following groups best describes your ethnic heritage?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. African American | 5. Latin American ("Hispanic") |
| 2. Arab American | 6. Native American |
| 3. Asian-American | 7. Other – please specify: _____ |
| 4. European American ("White") | |

Which of the following best describes your family's religious orientation?

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. No religion | 5. Methodist | 9. Presbyterian |
| 2. Episcopal | 6. Mormon | 10. Roman Catholic |
| 3. Jewish | 7. Northern Baptist | 11. Southern Baptist |
| 4. Lutheran | 8. Pentecostal | 12. Other: _____ |

How religious was your family? Not at all A little Somewhat Fairly Very

1 2 3 4 5

Did you grow up with both of your biological parents for all of your childhood? 1. Yes 2. No

If "No", which parent (s) or parent-figures(s) were the *most important* to you when you were growing up? When you fill out this questionnaire, please answer according to your experiences with the people you choose.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Biological mother and father | 7. Biological father and grandparent |
| 2. Biological mother only | 8. Adoptive mother and father |
| 3. Biological father only | 9. Single grandparent |
| 4. Biological mother and stepfather | 10. Two grandparents |
| 5. Biological mother and grandparent | 11. Other please specify: |
| 6. Biological father and stepmother | _____ |
| | _____ |

Are both of your parents or parent-figures still living? 1. Yes 2. No

If "No," please write down which one(s) died, and your age when he or she died.

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Deceased parent or parent-figure | Your age when he or she died |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Were your parents ever married to each other? 1. Yes 2. No

Were your parents ever separated or divorced? 1. Yes 2. No

If "Yes", how old were you when they separated? _____

How many years of school did your mother and father complete?

7 or less 8 to 9 10 to 11 12- high school 13 to 15 18-college degree 17 or more
 Father

Mother

What was the *main* type of work that your mother and father did (pick the closest category)?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Laborer | 5. Police, Firefighter | 9. Doctor, Lawyer, Professional |
| 2. Semiskilled worker | 6. Clerical, Sales | 10. Homemaker |
| 3. Farming, Forestry, Fishing. | 7. Nurse, Teacher, Technician | 11. Unemployed, on welfare |
| 4. Mechanic, Trades, Crafts | 8. Executive, Administrator | |

Father 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

Mother 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

How many brothers and sisters did you have (including stepbrothers and stepsisters)? _____

How many were older? _____ Are all of them still living? 1. Yes 2. No

Were you adopted? 1. Yes 2. No 3. I don't know If "Yes," at what age? _____

Did you have a disability that limited your activity or experiences when you were growing up?

If "Yes," what disability? _____

Many of the following questions ask about your mother and father separately. If you grew up with just one parent (or parent-figure), skip those questions that ask about a second parent.

If you grew up with a parent-figure who was not your biological parent, please use "mother" and "father" in this questionnaire. For example, if you grew up with an aunt and an uncle, pick you aunt to be your "mother" and your uncle to be "father".

When I approached my mother or father with a concern, they listened carefully to what I had to say.

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
| 1. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother and father would support and comfort me when I need it.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|-----------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 3. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

If I got into some kind of trouble, I knew I could count on my mother and father for help.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|-----------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 5. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother and father respected me as an individual, with my own thoughts and feelings.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|-----------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 7. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When it came to my mother's and father's expectations for me, I felt that they were pleased with me.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 9. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When I was obviously sick or injured, my mother and father were caring and comforting.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 11. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

13. My parent(s) made sure I had the right kind of food to eat.

| Usually did not | Half of the time | Usually | Almost Always | Always |
|-----------------|------------------|---------|---------------|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. My parents made sure I had acceptable clothing to wear.

| Usually did not | Half the time | Usually | Almost Always | Always |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|---------------|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

15. My parents(s) made sure that I had adequate supervision (for example, baby sitting) when I was young.

| Usually did not | Half the time | Usually | Almost Always | Always |
|-----------------|---------------|---------|---------------|--------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother father tended to be emotionally _____ (see below).

| | Cold & distant | Cool & Somewhat Distant | Medium- neutral | Warm but somewhat distant | Warm & Caring |
|------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 16. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I felt that my mother and father loved me.

| | Never | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always | Always |
|------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------|
| 18. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother and father told me that they loved me _____.

| | Never | Once | 2 or 3 times | Several Times | At least once a month |
|------------|-------|------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 20. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When I was in elementary school, my mother and father would hug, kiss, and show affection toward me _____.

| | Almost never | About once a year | About once a month | About once a week | Several Times a week |
|------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 22. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When I was a junior and senior in high school, my mother and father would hug, kiss, and show affection toward me _____.

| | Almost never | About once a year | About once a month | About once a week | Several Times a week |
|------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 24. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother and father would compliment me (say something nice about me) _____.

| | Almost never | About once a year | About once a month | About once a week | Several Times a week |
|------------|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 26. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother and father seemed to understand me well.

| | Almost never | A little | Some | Quite a bit | Really well |
|------------|--------------|----------|------|-------------|-------------|
| 28. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My parent(s) showed affection toward me without me beginning it; they just came up and were affectionate toward me.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Often |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|
| 30. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I felt that my mother and father approved of me, just the way I was.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 32. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I could talk openly and comfortably with my mother and father.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 34. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I felt close to my mother and father.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 36. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother and father ignored me as long as I didn't do anything to bother them.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 38. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

My mother and father made me feel like I would not be loved anymore if I did not behave.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Often |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|
| 40. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How many times did you feel stupid because of something your mother or father said or did to you?

| | Never | Once | 2 to 4 times | 5 to 9 times | 10 or more |
|------------|-------|------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 42. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How many times did your mother or father ridicule you and make fun of you?

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Often |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|
| 44. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 45. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How many times did your mother or father criticize you or make fun of you in front of other people?

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Often |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|
| 46. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How many times did your mother and father actually leave you or abandon you?

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Often |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|------------|-------|
| 48. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 49. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How often did your mother and father...

| | Almost never | About once a year | Several times a year | Once or twice a month | Once or more a week |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| * Make sure you did your school work? | | | | | |
| 50. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 51. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Help you with your schoolwork if you needed it?

| | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 52. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 53. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How often did your mother and father...

| | Never | Once or twice | A few times | About once a year | 2 or more times a year |
|---|-------|---------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| * Go to parent-teacher conferences and meetings at school | | | | | |
| 54. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

* Help you choose your classes?

| | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How important was it to your mother and father that you did as you could in school?

| | Not important | A little important | Important | Quite important | Very important |
|------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 58. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

60. What kinds of grades did you usually get in school? _____

When you got a *good* grade in school, how did your mother and father usually react?

| | Praised me, & gave me greater respect afterward | Praised me, but treated me the same | Thought it was nice, but did not make a big deal out of it | Did not say much | Did not talk about it |
|------------|--|--|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 61. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When you got a *poor* grade in school, how did your mother and father usually react?

| | Became concerned and tried to find ways I could improve | Became concerned but didn't try to help me | Were somewhat concerned | Did not say much | Did not talk about it |
|------------|---|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 63. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 64. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How often did you do each of the following things
on average when you were a teenager?

| | Never or Almost never | A few times a year | Once or twice a month | Once or twice a week | Several times a week |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 65. Went to the movies, dances, games, etc. with my friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 66. Hung out with friends outside of class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 67. Studied with friends outside of class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 68. Talked to a friend about something I was upset about. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 69. Went over to a friend's house. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 70. Had friends over to my house. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 71. Exercised or played sports with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When you were a teenager, who decided the following things in your home?

Please use the following options:

| | My parent(s) decided this without discussing it with me 1 | My parent (s) made the final decision after discussing it with me 2 | My parent(s) made the decision together 3 | I made the final decision after discussing it with my parent(s) 4 | I decided this without discussing it with my parent(s) 5 |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| 72. What clothes I wore or how I cut or styled my hair | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 73. How late I stayed out at night. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 74. How much time I spent with friends. (includes time spent with girl- and boy-friends) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 75. When I had to go to bed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 76. Which shows I could watch on TV. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 77. When I could start dating. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 78. If I had to eat with the family at meal time. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 79. Where I went at night or on the weekends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 80. Whether I could go out for a sport or other extracurricular activity. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 81. Whether or not I went to college or technical school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 82. If I worked when I was in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 83. If I had to get a summer job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When you were in junior high and high school
how often did you...?

| | Once a year or less | A few times a year | About once a month | About twice a month | About once a week |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 84. Do laundry | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 85. Clean the bathroom | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 86. Wash floors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 87. Dust the furniture | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 88. Buy groceries | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When you were in junior high and high school,
how often did you...?

| | Almost never | About once a year | About once a month | About once a week | About daily |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 89. Wash dishes | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 90. Make meals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 91. Take care of a younger brother or sister (skip if you didn't have any) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

After your mother or father said you should not do something, how often did you go ahead and do it anyway?

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost Always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 92. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 93. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When you were a teenager, how often did your mother and father talk with you about your school work and grades?

| | Never | Once | A few times | Many times | Once or more a month |
|------------|-------|------|-------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 94. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 95. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When you were a teenager, how often did your mother and father talk with you about planning for your future?

| | Never | Once | A few times | Many times | Once or more a month |
|------------|-------|------|-------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 96. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 97. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

When I was emotionally upset, I talked with my mother and father about it.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost always |
|------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 98. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 99. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I felt that my mother and father punished me more than what I really deserved.

| | Almost never | Seldom | Sometimes | Usually | Almost always |
|-------------|--------------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| 100. Father | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 101. Mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Thank you! Please turn to the next survey.

Your ID: _____
Age: _____
Sex: M or F (circle one)

Family Communication Worksheet

This study is interested in your current relationship with your parents or parent figures. In particular we would like you to describe the messages you receive from you parents/parent figures. The messages may be positive, negative, or a combination of positive and negative depending on your relationship. However, most important to us are messages that represent typical interactions between you and your parents/ parent figures. Please be as specific as possible. Confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed.

Please describe your communication with your father/ father figure and the types of messages that you receive.

Please describe your communication with you mother/ mother figure and the types of messages that you receive.

Please make an "X" in the space that best describes your relationship with your father/father figure.
Please make an "O" in the space that best describes your relationship with your mother/ mother figure.
If you grew up with just one parent/parent figure, skip the mark about that parent.

12. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Satisfying Dissatisfying
13. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Fulfilling Disappointing
14. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Rewarding Punishing
15. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Positive Negative
16. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Good Bad

PLEASE GO THE NEXT SURVEY

Your ID: _____

Age: _____

Sex: M or F (circle one)

Compliance Survey

This survey is concerned with how we get people to comply with our wishes. Indicate how often each statement is true for *you personally* when you try to influence other persons. Use the following scale:

1 = almost never true

2 = rarely true

3 = occasionally true

4 = often true

5 = almost always true

- _____ 1. I am extremely careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when I attack their ideas.
- _____ 2. When individuals are very stubborn, I use insults to soften the stubbornness
- _____ 3. I try very hard to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I try to influence them.
- _____ 4. When people refuse to do a task I know is important, without good reason, I tell them they are reasonable.
- _____ 5. When others do things I regard as stupid, I try to be extremely gentle with them.
- _____ 6. If individuals I am trying to influence really deserve it, I attack their character.
- _____ 7. When people behave in ways that are in very poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.
- _____ 8. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.
- _____ 9. When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance I lose my temper and say rather strong things to them.
- _____ 10. When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.
- _____ 11. When individuals insult me, I get a lot pleasure out of really telling them off.
- _____ 12. When I dislike individuals greatly, I try not to show it in what I say or how I say it.
- _____ 13. I like poking fun at people who do things which are very stupid in order to stimulate their intelligence.
- _____ 14. When I attack a person's ideas, I try not to damage their self-concepts.
- _____ 15. When I try to influence people, I make a great effort not to offend them.
- _____ 16. When people do things which are mean or cruel, I attack their character in order to help correct their behavior.
- _____ 17. I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.
- _____ 18. When nothing seems to work in trying to influence others, I yell and scream in order to get some movement from them.
- _____ 19. When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.
- _____ 20. When an argument shifts to personal attacks, I try very hard to change the subject.

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT SURVEY

Your ID: _____

Age: _____

Sex: M or F (circle one)

Relation Style Questionnaire

This survey is concerned with how we connect and interact with other people. Indicate how often each statement is true for you personally in your relations with other people. Use the following scale:

- 1 = Completely unlike me
- 2 = Somewhat unlike me
- 3 = Slightly unlike me
- 4 = Neither like me or unlike me
- 5 = Slightly like me
- 6 = Somewhat like me
- 7 = Completely like me

When indicating your choice, *if possible*, attempt to make a distinction between the types and your ratings.

- _____ It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others.
I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me.
I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

- _____ I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.
It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others depend on me.

- _____ I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationship, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.

- _____ I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others.
I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely or to depend on them.
I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX D

Your ID: _____

Age: _____

Sex: M or F (circle one)

Communication Record Packet Information

This second part of the survey is made up of two communication records and a meaning measure. With these surveys, you will be asked to record what you remember from conversation that you just had with a parent or parent figure. By documenting what happened in the conversation, you will help this study understand real situations that you and parents participate in.

You should make sure that within this packet you have been given two copies of the *Communication Record*, and one copy of the *Episode Intention Survey*. You are being asked to use the *Communication Record* to fill in the details about conversation with your parents **that just happened**. This conversation can be either in person or over the phone, but please no internet or instant messaging chats. The conversation can be of any length, but must more than one or two sentences.

The first copy of the *Communication Record* is for you to record information about a conversation on any kind of topic, but is straight forward. The second copy of the *Communication Record* is meant to be paired with the *Episode Intention Survey* for you to record information about a conversation that has at *least one sarcastic remark*. For the purposes of this study, a *sarcastic remark* is a counterfactual statement that is made with a target in mind (which could be a person, an object, a place, or an expectation between people). When you have had such a conversation, fill out both forms. The second form will ask you to think of what was said sarcastically, and what it meant.

Examining the following forms even before you think you might speak to your parent figure, so you can get a feel for what the surveys will be looking for. After you have a conversation with your parent figure, please try to fill out the survey as soon as possible, and on your own. If you occasionally feel uncertain about how to answer, simply use your best judgments. Importantly, there are no *right or wrong* answers. The research is only interested in your perceptions of your own family experience. Please make sure to provide a rating or answer for each item.

Thank you for your participation.

Your ID: _____

Age: _____

Sex: M or F (circle one)

Communication Record

Please take this with you and save it for after you have a typical interaction with your parents. Please fill the entire record out as soon as is appropriate after the interaction.

1. Date of the interaction: _____ (month) _____ (day)
2. Time of the interaction: _____ (hour) _____ (AM or PM)
3. Length of the interaction: _____ (hour) _____ (min)
4. Description of who was interacted with: _____ (mother, father, mother-figure, father figure) _____ (age)
5. Length of time you have known the interacted with for: _____ (years) _____ (month)
6. What type was the communication? (circle one)

1
2
3

Face-to-face
long distance telephone
local telephone
7. Would you consider the interaction public or private? (circle one and state place)

1
2
Where? _____

Public
Private
8. Were others present? Yes or No
9. What was the role of talk? Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following:

This was talk for talk's sake.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____
 Strong Agreement Strong Disagreement

Main purpose of talk was to accomplish some task. (Such as gaining information to complete a project, or solve a problem.)

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____
 Strong Agreement Strong Disagreement

Main purpose of the talk was to facilitate some social objective. (Such as talk surrounding sports activity or party.)

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____
 Strong Agreement Strong Disagreement

23. How valuable was this conversation to you for your life *right now*:
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Extremely Important | | | | | | Not Important At All | | |
24. How valuable was this conversation for your future?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Extremely Important | | | | | | Not Important At All | | |
25. Indicate the extent to which this talk resulted in a change of your *attitude*:
- | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|-----------|---|----------|----|----|
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| Negative | | No Change | | Positive | | |
26. Indicate the extent to which this talk resulted in a change of your *behavior*:
- | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|-----------|---|----------|----|----|
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| Negative | | No Change | | Positive | | |
- Describe behavior change:
-
-
27. Indicate the extent to which this talk changed your *thinking or ideas*:
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| No Change | | | | | Great Change | | | | |
- Describe change in thinking/ideas:
-
28. Indicate the extent to which this talk resulted in a change of your *feelings*:
- | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|-----------|---|----------|----|----|
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| Negative | | No Change | | Positive | | |
- Describe change in feelings:
-
29. Indicate the extent to which this talk resulted in a change of your *relationship*:
- | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|-----------|---|-----------------|----|----|
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| Much More Distant | | No Change | | Much More Close | | |

30. Indicate the extent to which this talk changed your *attraction*(as a person you would want to interact with) toward person:
- | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|--------|-------------------|----|----|
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| Greatly Decreased | | | No | Greatly Increased | | |
| Attraction | | | Change | Attraction | | |
31. On an average day how many people do you talk to? _____
32. Out of the total amount of time you spend conversing per week, what percentage of that time do you think is spent talking with this person?
- _____ %
33. How intimate was the interaction?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Not really | | | | | | | Very | |
| Intimate | | | | | | | Intimate | |
34. How intimate is the relationship, by and large?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Very | | | | | | | Not really | |
| Intimate | | | | | | | Intimate | |
35. How satisfied are you with the relationship as a whole?
- | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Very | | | | | | | Very | |
| Dissatisfied | | | | | | | Satisfied | |

APPENDIX E: Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) Adult Attachment Model

Model of Adult Attachment Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991

| Model of Self (Dependence) | | Model of Other (Avoidance) | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Positive (Low) | Negative (High) | Positive (Low) | Negative (High) |
| Cell I SECURE Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy | Cell II PREOCCUPIED Preoccupied with relationships | Cell IV DISMISSING Dismissing of intimacy Counter-dependent | Cell III FEARFUL Fearful of intimacy Social avoidant |

APPENDIX F: Compendium of Sarcasm Theory Usage Examples

What follows is a compendium of forms sarcastic language, organized by influencing theorist/theory, or general principle. The scheme provided below are evident through the review of literature that given in the body of the text. All of these forms of understanding sarcasm commonly imply that there is a target for the statement: Either the listener themselves or some third party.

| | Sarcastic Utterance | Literal Meaning |
|--|--|--|
| Gricean/Standard Pragmatic Rules: | | |
| Ex. 1 | "Today is a <i>great</i> day." | "Today is a <i>bad</i> day." |
| Ex. 2 | "You are a <i>great</i> friend." | "You are a <i>bad</i> friend." |
| Echoic Mention: A previous utterance is repeated, with other implied meaning. | | |
| Ex. 3 | "I can help you all day!" | "You said you would help me and you have not at all." |
| Ex. 4 | "This car is a dream! What a bargain!" | "This car is a nightmare. It isn't worth as much as I paid for. Thanks for telling me otherwise." |
| Echoic Reminder: Remind listeners of some antecedent event. | | |
| Ex. 5 (<i>Sarcastic remark, not ironic</i>) | "Thanks a lot!" | "...No thanks to you." |
| Ex. 5 (<i>Implicit and positive</i>) | "You are a great friend." | "There is reason to expect that you wouldn't act as a great friend would, but in this instance you have acted contrary." |
| Ex. 6 (<i>Explicit and negative</i>) | "What took you so long?" | "I needed to be picked up immediately from work because I lost my keys and I am standing in the rain. You arrived faster than I expected." |
| Allusional Pretense Theory: Violated Expectation and Insincerity | | |
| Ex. 7 | "Your room is so clean now Johnny! Thank you!" | "Remember how we discussed you cleaning your room this morning? You have not cleaned it and I don't feel you are respecting my request." |

Ex. 8

“How old did you say you
were?”

“You are not acting as mature
mature as someone your
age is expected to.

APPENDIX G: Examples of Sarcasm from the Communication Record

| <u>Target</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Usage</u> |
|--------------------|--------------|---|
| Listener | Financial | "Someday when I'm a millionaire you can get anything you want and never have to work another day" |
| Listener | Financial | "And who's money are you going to use?" |
| Listener | Education | "Well if you don't want to study you can practice marching and saluting instead." We both chuckled and continued talking. |
| Listener | Education | "'Yea we will definitely get your own car with those grades.' The comment was said to benefit me and make me realize after it was said that I need to study more and take my work more seriously." |
| Listener | Health | "What are you going to use the money for? Drugs?" |
| Listener | Health | "What are you an alcoholic now?" |
| Listener | Humor | "'You're insane.' She says this to be funny." |
| Listener | Personal | "I'm sure you were real behaved" |
| Listener | Personal | "Maybe your lil' sis is better than you." He was just teasing me for comparing myself to my younger sister." |
| Listener | Work | I told my mom that a drunk guy offered me a job at Hooters and she laughed and said, "Yeah you should work there!" Obviously I knew she was kidding because she would not want me to work there. |
| Other(Work) | Work | "How was work Dad?" "Ohh just great!" Raising his eyebrows and giving a goofy expression. |
| Other(Family) | Personal | "Yeah your father and I are really happy." (My) understanding (was): "We don't talk anymore. Its just not working. We are going to try to work on it though." |
| Other (Family) | Personal | "We were talking about my brother and my mom said 'You now he's such a shy kid...' This was sarcastic because he is not shy at all." |
| Other (Not Family) | Personal | My mom directed her sarcastic towards the old builders She said..."Well the old builder's should stay and finish the job things would really get done. |
| Other(Family Pet) | Humor | "My dog apparently passed some gas and my father said 'Wow that smells good'". |
| Other(President) | Criticism | "Sarcastic remarks were toward a certain "puppet-monkey" in charge of a certain superpower of the world and his re-election efforts involving images pretty much inappropriate to political-strengthening ads." |

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